# southern voice

Gay ex-Falcon **Esera Tuaolo** returns to ATL for Pride.
**Page 9**

**Halcyon**, other female bands form backbone of stage line-up.
**Page 19**

Nightlife heats up with bar events, concerts.
**Page 23**

Grand marshals include 50-year couple **Bill Weaver** and **Doug Johnson**.
**Page 37**

# PRIDE 2003

June 27-29, 2003

Photo by R.O. Youngblood

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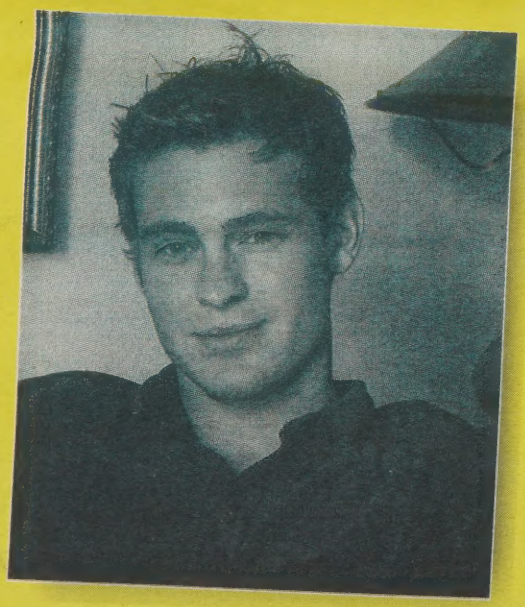

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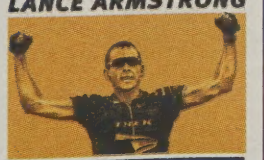

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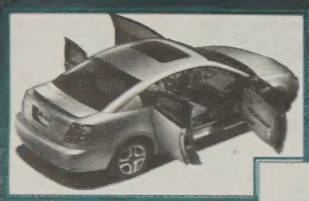

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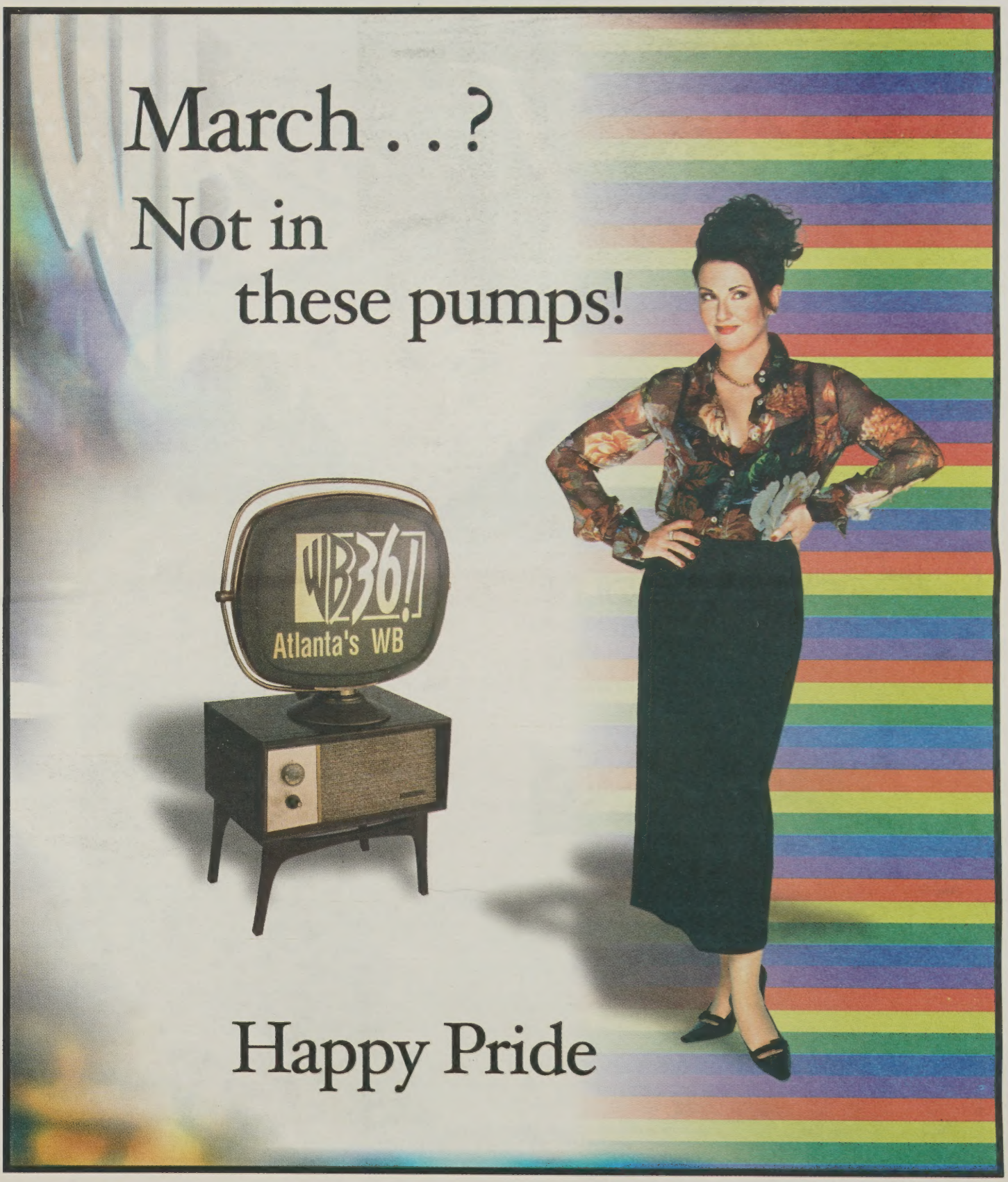
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PRIDE 2003

# Three-day park festival focuses on 'Freedom to Be'

## Volunteers, donations needed to keep event free

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

As thousands flock to Piedmont Park for Pride, organizers say they hope attendees will take time to reflect on the theme 'Freedom to Be,' as well as take time to donate to help keep the festival free.

Despite the myriad advances in gay rights since the 1969 Stonewall Riots that the Atlanta Pride celebration commemorates, many battles remain to be won.

In many parts of the country, including much of Georgia, gay people still can't live without fear for their physical safety — much less have the right to marry, adopt children, serve in the military and be protected in hate crime and non-discrimination laws.

In the midst of all of the festivities of the next three days, that's the message this year's Pride theme, "Freedom to Be," is meant to invoke.

"It's kind of the follow-up to last year's theme, 'The Power of Pride,'" said Donna Narducci, executive director of the Atlanta Pride Committee, organizers of this year's 33rd annual festival.

"Last year's theme was based on the events after Sept. 11, that really made us cognizant of who we are as far as GLBT people, wanting to have the same rights as are afforded to heterosexual people in this country," she said.

This year, festival organizers hope the "Freedom to Be" theme will remind Pride goers that "although we have made great strides in tolerance and even acceptance, we still don't have the rights to back them up," she said.

While last year's Pride drew some criticism for allegedly losing its political edge, Narducci said the festival makes a statement in and of itself.

"The very fact that we come together in the large numbers that we do, and we are out there all weekend long and take over the streets with the parade on Sunday, is a very political statement," she said. "That is furthered by our speakers and the nonprofit groups in our market that represent different political interests that raise political awareness."

This year's Pride festival includes several changes, including the route for Sunday's parade. The event, which steps off at 1 p.m. from near the Civic Center MARTA station, will enter Piedmont Park from the Charles Allen entrance instead of the 12th Street gate in order to prevent repeating last year's "bottleneck" of floats and onlookers, Narducci said.

From scheduling to security and from the parade to the three days of events in Piedmont Park, the Pride festival is a massive undertaking that takes a full year and $500,000 to produce, organizers said.

Pride organizers estimate they will need an enormous 2,400 volunteer hours to put on the weekend festival, according to Trisha Clymore, Pride event director.

While some have been working for months, Pride attendees can still sign up for a volunteer shift during the event by simply going to the volunteer tent in Piedmont Park.

"The retention that we have in volunteers is really energizing to me," said Clymore, who began working with the festival in 1995.

Among other duties, volunteers will solicit donations in Piedmont Park and along the parade route, she said. Organizers hope to raise $30,000 in donations in the park, to go along with the sponsorships and market revenue that help pay for the festival.

"It's been a very strong year for us for corporate financial support," Narducci said. "Thanks to that assistance, and also the Friends of Pride individual donors and the contributions people make in the park, we are able to put on the event and keep it free."

Cash and in-kind donations from corporate sponsors total about $350,000 this year, Narducci said.

"Barring really bad weather or any other unforeseen events that could cause us to shut down or cancel some portion of the time, we should do well," she said.

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PRIDE 2003

# Memories

*Rep. **Karla Drenner** (D-Avondale Estates), the first openly gay state legislator in the Southeast (Photo by Sher Pruitt)*

The Pride right after my first session in the Georgia General Assembly [2001], I was honored to be chosen as one of the grand marshals. I will never forget during the parade, coming around the corner where Outwrite is, and seeing thousands and thousands of people cheering — my arms still get chill bumps thinking about it.

After the first session, I felt so beat up, and all I had to do was go to Pride and see that and feel the strength of the community. It re-energized me and reminded me why it is so important to be out and proud.

For me, it was validation that Pride isn't just three days per year — it's really 24/7, 365 days per year. I loved it.

*Drag legend **Charlie Brown**, self-proclaimed "Bitch of the South" and host of Charlie Brown's Cabaret at Backstreet Atlanta (Photo by Sher Pruitt)*

My first Gay Pride was in 1980. I had just won Miss Gay Georgia. The promoter announced that I would be in the parade and he would have a convertible, so I showed up with approximately 250 other people. He didn't show up, so I rode on the back of the leathermen's pick-up truck.

To see it grow from 250 to 200,000 — and growing — always gives me such pride in our community. I am proud to say I have only missed it three times, and believe me, if I am not there, I'm sick.

God bless our community.

***Philip Rafshoon**, Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse owner*

My favorite memory of Pride was 1996, the year that we moved into Outwrite's current location at the corner of Piedmont & 10th in the heart of Midtown. The corner always had many people standing there during the parade, as it is the last intersection before the parade enters Piedmont Park.

So we put out a sound system, turned the patio into a DJ booth, and had the late Aaron Kirby, who was on our staff, and a DJ from New York play music. It turned into a big street party and the crowd went wild. The party has become larger every year since then, but the year that we started the music is the one that I remember the best.

*Decatur City Commissioner **Kecia Cunningham**, Georgia's first African-American openly gay elected official*

My favorite memories of Pride are actually images. It is so empowering to see us in all of our flavors. Pride is the embodiment of diversity. The LBGT community is beautiful — we come in all shapes, sizes, colors, persuasions and styles.

I am always proudest of our parade as we take on the streets and show the world who we are. Last year, we had that wonderful Latina group with the feather headdresses in rainbow colors — how beautiful, powerful and memorable. We are a such a fantastic community. Just look at our symbol — the rainbow, one of nature's most perfect creations.


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PRIDE 2003

# Ex-Falcon celebrates first Pride in Atlanta

## Esera Tuaolo rocked NFL by coming out last year

By RYAN LEE

He's been in Atlanta before, but never like this. During his one season playing for the Atlanta Falcons, Esera Tuaolo was a closeted, depressed and fearful gay man.

Four years later, after bursting out of the closet in October 2002, the former NFL defensive lineman returns to Atlanta this weekend to celebrate his first ever Gay Pride festival.

"The kids aren't going to come down with us," joked the affable Tuaolo. "My husband and I are going to just enjoy the gay community down there, and hope to have a great time."

Tuaolo attends an Atlanta Pride VIP dinner Saturday, gives a speech and rides in the parade Sunday, according to Trisha Clymore, event director for the Atlanta Pride Committee.

It's only been six months since Tuaolo announced to the sporting world that he is gay, but he said it feels like he's been out for years.

In those six months, received thousands of e-mails from across the world, learned about the history of the gay rights movement and dedicated himself to highlighting the plight of young gays in speeches to high school and college students about homophobia and tolerance.

The changes are not exclusively external.

"My life is a lot healthier, and my family and I are much happier that we don't have to live in lies," Tuaolo said. "Our children will know we are proud of who we are."

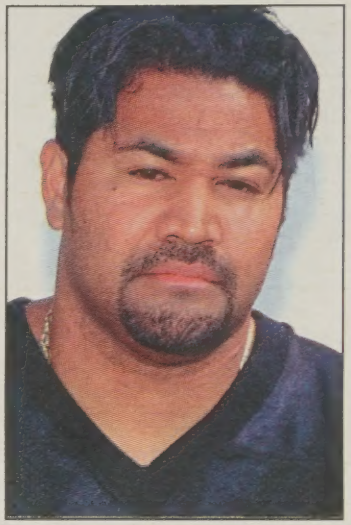
### He's come a long way

Before the "Real Sports" piece on HBO, before the interview on ESPN The Magazine, before the entire world knew that a professional football player — a lineman, no less — was gay, Tuaolo had to discuss his sexual orientation with someone he abandoned 25 years earlier.

Tuaolo was seven years old when he first heard the word faggot. His friend had to explain to him what it meant, and once understood, Tuaolo became determined not to be identified as one.

"That's when I got really scared of it," Tuaolo said about being gay. "That's when I threw that child in the closet and became an actor."

Tuaolo cites his family — his partner, Mitchell Wherley, and their adopted twins, Mateo and Michele — as the motivating factor for sharing his secret with the world. But he adds that among the most pleasurable rewards of coming out is reconnecting with himself.



Former National Football League lineman **Esera Tuaolo** says coming out enables him to teach his children that 'we are proud of who we are.' (Photo by AP)

"What's so great about coming out is that I am able to bring that child out of the closet," he said. "I can tell him that I am gay, and that I am sorry."

### Best, worst of times

During the 1998-99 NFL season, Tuaolo was living every football players' dream: He and the rest of the Falcons were advancing to the Super Bowl.

But unlike his teammates, Tuaolo couldn't parade his spouse around, couldn't introduce Wherley to the other families and couldn't completely enjoy the pomp of professional football's biggest game.

"Atlanta was awesome because we were all like a family down there," Tuaolo said. "Living with my secret was another story. Hiding and not being able to share my husband with anyone else was very hard."

During that winning season, Wherley would often travel from Minneapolis to Atlanta, where he and his lover would carefully meet and guard their conversations so no one would have suspicions about Tuaolo's sexual orientation. Even as he reached the pinnacle of his playing days, his partner could be included only at a distance.

"Going to the Super Bowl was the most exciting time I've had in football — that's the ultimate," he said. "But I couldn't share it with anyone, and that was stressful."

Please see ESERA TUAOLO on Page 39

"These guys are stunningly good. My first experience with AGMC took my breath away with pleasant surprise, and their collaboration with Dallas, Turtle Creek Chorale in January was amazing."
- Mike Fleming, Southern Voice
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PRIDE 2003

# Dance diva Gioia brings solo show to Piedmont Park

## Former Exposé singer overcame throat tumor for comeback

By ARJAN TIMMERMANS

Gioia Bruno comes back to Atlanta on Saturday to headline the annual Pride celebration at Piedmont Park. The former singer of the '80s all-girl trio Exposé is rapidly becoming one of the new club divas, with gay audiences raving her sizzling club anthems and heavy dose of positive energy.

"I got tired of the rock music. I really just wanted to dance," says the singer, who likes to go by only her first name, pronounced "Joy-ah."

"With Exposé I never really had the chance to throw it down, because the three of us simply had to make the same steps all the time," Gioia says. "Now, I can really show all my energy."

Gioia recently signed a record deal with KOCH Records, the largest independent music label in the country. With its slick promotion machine, KOCH plans to push Gioia back into the mainstream spotlight with her repertoire of dance music.

And after almost 20 years in the music business, the artist says she is not looking to slow down any time soon. Besides being a singer, Gioia is a mother, wife, safe sex advocate, songwriter and producer.

When she was part of Expose in the late '80s and early '90s, the band released the chart-topping albums "Exposure" and "What You Don't Know," which resulted in hit singles such as "Come Go With Me," "Point Of No Return," and "Let Me Be The Last To Know."

At the height of the group's success, Gioia was diagnosed with an inoperable benign throat tumor. She was not able to speak for three years and doctors told her she would never sing again.

Gioia said she turned to religion and meditation to find strength and encouragement. And after almost five years, the tumor disappeared.

With more fervor than ever before, she navigated her career back on track. She sang rock music as the lead of WET and toured with Bon Jovi's Richie Sambora and others.

But as time progressed, Gioia said she could not deny that pop and dance music were her favorites, and her transition from rock to dance accelerated when her songs were remixed and became popular in clubs.

"It all made sense actually," she says. "For a long time, I did not want to go back to dance. There is so much more to me than that. But dance has changed. You can write any music and it can be transformed in wonderful dance music. There is so much opportunity."

Gioia recently got a boost in gay popularity when a Junior Vasquez remix of her song 'From the Inside' was featured on the latest 'Queer As Folk' soundtrack. (Photo courtesy of Gioia)

KOCH will release the song "From The Inside" as a radio single this summer, and Gioia recently got a boost in gay popularity when a Junior Vasquez remix of the song was featured on the latest "Queer As Folk" soundtrack.

Gioia also has a very personal connection to gays. Both her brother-in-law and her best friend died of AIDS and she wrote the song "Free To Be" in their memory.

"It is a positive song, because no matter how bad their day was, they kept a positive attitude," she says.

As a resident of Ft. Lauderdale, gay friends — or "the community" as she likes to call it — surround Gioia.

"My whole world is gay," she says. "There are so many gay people here. I find that my numerous gay friends are so amazingly fun, artistic and brave."

At Atlanta Pride, Gioia performs three Exposé songs, "Come Go With Me," "Let Me Be The One," "Point of No Return," and her current club hits "Free To Be" and "From The Inside."

"I will be performing by myself in Atlanta, unless I can find a couple of guys there to fondle," she adds, laughing at her comment. "I am pretty crazy. Some of the stuff that comes out of my mouth, I cannot believe I say that."

### MORE INFO

For a complete schedule of the Pride stages, see Pages 13-17.

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PRIDE 2003

# Memories

***Lobbyist Larry Pellegrini**, Georgia Rural Urban Summit executive director*

I had just come out when Cracker Barrel Restaurants started firing their gay employees in January of 1991. I got involved in the demonstrations and sit-ins. Along with an extraordinary group of activists, I experienced for the first time what it was like to actually fight back against bigotry and discrimination.

The inspiring campaign for equal employment rights sparked a great deal of interest and support amongst the LGBT community. Pride numbers doubled from the previous year. I had never seen anything like it.

I was overwhelmed by the sheer numbers and the feeling that something new in the way of gay activism had begun. Few, including me, had even said the word queer out loud six months prior, but here we were wearing Queer Nation t-shirts in public. Atlanta and Atlanta Pride were never the same from this year on.

***Kent Gash**, Alliance Theatre associate artistic director*

My first Pride in Atlanta was probably the most memorable. It was either '90 or '91, and I was an actor at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. I rented a car and buzzed down to Atlanta for Pride since I was used to Pride in New York City, and there wasn't gonna be a party in Montgomery, ya know?

The thing I remember most was how struck I was by the sense of ease and relaxation everyone seemed to have and that so many people, had come from all over the country to experience the special ATL vibe!

Of all the cities I've ever visited or lived in, Atlanta has the finest brothas on Earth, so suffice it to say ... I had a fierce and amazing time.

Just what the doctor ordered before returning to artistically fulfilling but sexually repressed Montgomery, Ala.

***Melissa Carter**, Q100 DJ (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)*

I moved to Atlanta in 1992. At the time, I was still in the closet and had just moved from small-town Tennessee, so I still had the mindset I was the only lesbian in the world, since there was no "Will & Grace" or "Queer as Folk."

But then there was Pride. In the summer of '92, I attended my first Atlanta Pride celebration and was amazed not only at the amount of gays and lesbians I saw, but also at the diversity I witnessed. I had been so self-involved at the struggle of simply being gay, I never thought about the beautiful differences within that group.

That experience helped me not only come out to my family later on, but it also helped give me the confidence to become the only out full-time on-air radio DJ in Atlanta.

***Kevin Bynes**, coordinator for AID Atlanta's "Deeper Love" youth initiative*

My first Pride in Atlanta was in 1997. What I remember about my first Pride is that after 19 years in a self-imposed closet, I was escorted by some of Atlanta's most out and active individuals to this thing called "Pride." What it looked like to me was a sea of queers in a park that was much too small to contain them all.

I'd never had any gay friends or been to a gay club, and here I was surrounded by beautiful dykedom and faggotry. What's more is some of them were black like me. I felt like the proverbial"kid in the candy store."

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PRIDE 2003

# Pride Weekend calendar of events

## FRIDAY JUNE 27

**Atlanta Pride Festival***
6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Piedmont Park
404-929-0071
www.atlantapride.org

**Coca-Cola Main Stage***
6 p.m. – A Few Degrees
6:45 p.m. – Empire44
7:30 p.m. – Cheryl Hill
8:30 p.m. – Hot August Knights
9:30 p.m. – BETTY

**Pride Vigil***
7:30 p.m.
Co-sponsored by AIDS Survival Project and Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative
Piedmont Park
Verizon Wireless Acoustic Stage
www.aidssurvivalproject.com
www.alci.org

*** Pride Commitment Ceremony**
8 p.m.
Co-sponsored by Atlanta Couples Together
Sheraton Midtown Atlanta at Colony Square, Crown Room
404-365-2455
www.atlantacouplestogether.org

**YouthPride Dance**
8 p.m. - 11 p.m.
Blu
960 Spring St.
$3, under 18
404-378-7722
www.youthpride.org

**GLBTQ Prom**
8 p.m. – 2 a.m.
Sponsored by Unity Fellowship Church
StudioPlex
659 Auburn Ave.
$40 at the door
770-469-0332
www.unityfellowshipofatl.org

**Coff-E House with Adodi Muse, Estrogen and Malika**
7:30 p.m.
First Existentialist Congregation
470 Candler Park Dr.
404-524-0304
www.chariscircle.org

Former Modern Hero frontman **Jeffrey Butts** rocks Pride's Acoustic Stage on Saturday afternoon.

**Bingo with Bubba D. Licious**
6 p.m.
Blake's on the Park
227 10th St. NE
404-892-5786

**Mr. Georgia Pageant**
8:30 p.m.
The Armory
836 Juniper St.
404-881-9280

**America Drag King Show**
9 p.m. – Singers
10 p.m. – Drag Kings
My Sister's Room
222 East Howard Ave.
Decatur
404-370-1990

**Heaven: Calling All Angels**
10 p.m.
Park Tavern
500 10th St.
404-249-0001
www.evite.com/GIRLSWARA@aol.com/HEAVEN2003

**Pride Weekend with DJ Abel**
11 p.m.
Blu
960 Spring St.
404-877-1221

Please see **CALENDAR** on **Page 14**

Most nightclub events are subject to cover charges.
* Denotes events sponsored or co-sponsored by the Atlanta Pride Committee.

PRIDE 2003

# Pride Weekend calendar of events

CALENDAR, continued from on Page 13

## SATURDAY JUNE 28

**Pride 5K Run/Walk**
7 a.m. registration; 8 a.m. start
Sponsored by FrontRunners Atlanta
Grant Park at Cyclorama
www.frontrunnersatlanta.org

**Alanta Pride Festival***
11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Piedmont Park
404-929-0071
www.atlantapride.org

**Coca-Cola Main Stage***
12:30 p.m. – Fly
1:15 p.m. – Heidi Hensley Band
2 p.m. – Heston
2:45 p.m. – Jodie Manross Band
3:30 p.m. – Tret Fure
4 p.m. – Speaker: Lynn Barfield, Enlight Atlanta
4:15 p.m. – Vonnie
5 p.m. – Radio Theory
5: 30 p.m. – Speakers: Rep. Nick Moraitakis (D-Atlanta); Allen Thornell, Georgia Equality; Decatur City Commissioner Kecia Cunningham
5:45 p.m. – Bachelor Red
6:30 p.m. – Pisces Kiss
7:30 p.m. – Steff Mahan
8:15 p.m. – Speaker: Hector Vargas, Lambda Legal
8:30 p.m. – The Woodyz
9:30 p.m. – Gioia

**Verizon Wireless Acoustic Stage**
12:30 p.m. – Chasemissy
1:15 p.m. – Kevin DuRard
2 p.m. – Barbara Gehlman
2:45 p.m. – Anthony Antoine
3:30 p.m. – Sue Witty
4:15 p.m. – Eric Himan
5 p.m. – Deidra McCalla
5:45 p.m. – Kristy Lee
6:30 p.m. – Jeffrey Butts
7 p.m. – Morticia DeVille & the Gospel Echoes

**SPLASH! Competition**
Sponsored by Atlanta Rainbow Trout
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Piedmont Park Pool
www.atlantarainbowtrout.com

Gender bender **Amber Taylor** performs original pop tunes on Sunday from the Pride festival's Acoustic stage.

Atlanta Mayor **Shirley Franklin** speaks from Pride's Main Stage on Sunday afternoon, after joining Atlanta Police Chief Richard Pennington in the Pride parade. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

**Dyke March***
6 p.m.
Charles Allen Gate entrance to Piedmont Park

**Heaven: Summer Fling**
5 p.m. to midnight
Park Tavern
500 10th St.
404-249-0001
www.evite.com/GIRL-SWARA@aol.com/HEAVEN2003

**'Group Sex' Pride Concert**
9 p.m. doors open, 10 p.m. show
Echo Lounge
551 Flat Shoals Ave.
404-681-3600
www.echostatic.com

**Pre-Pride Dance Party**
9 p.m.
Rico's View on Ponce
736 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-873-3220

**Pride Weekend DJ Joe Gauthreaux**
11 p.m.
Blu
960 Spring St.
404-877-1221

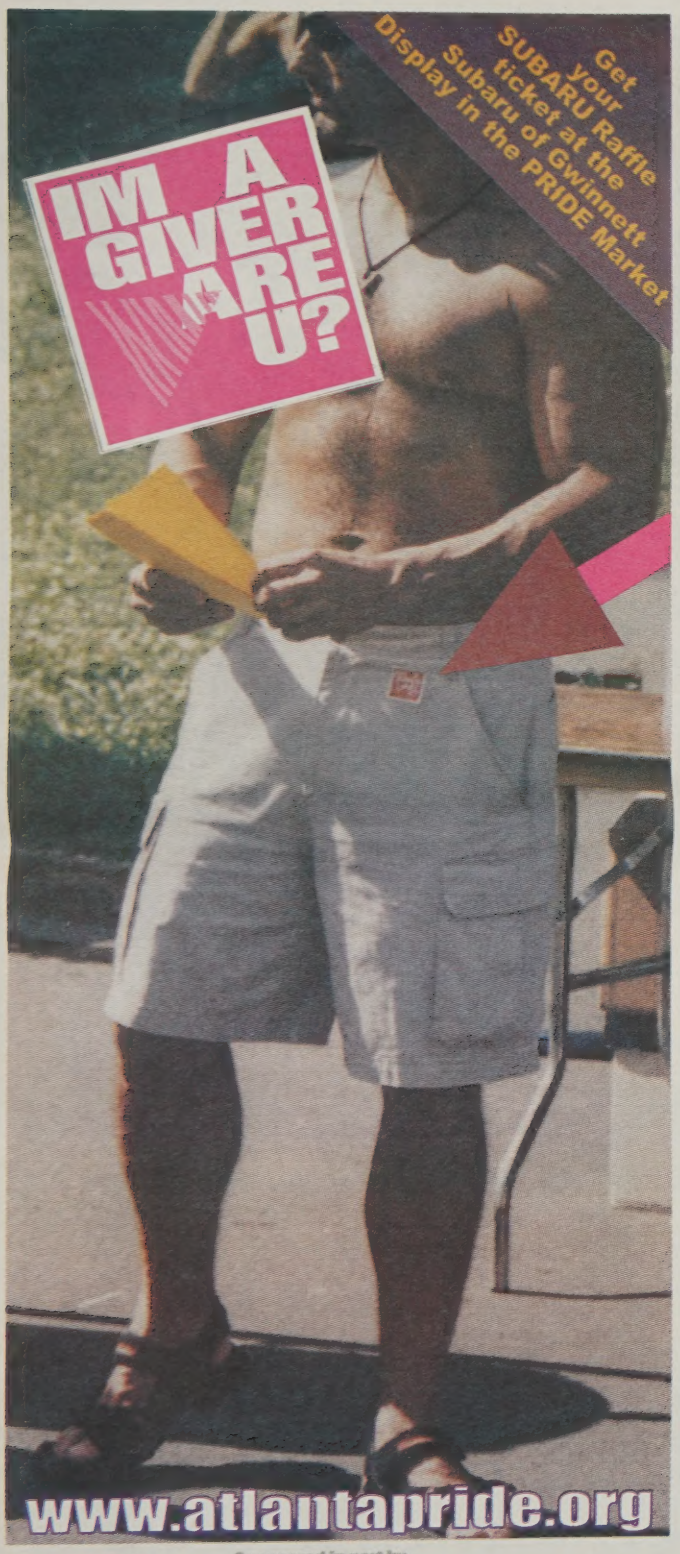
## SUNDAY JUNE 29

**Pride Service & Balloon Release**
9 a.m.
First Metropolitan Community Church
1379 Tullie Rd.
404-325-4143
www.firstmcc.com

**Pride Worship Service**
9:30 a.m.
St. Michael the Defender Old Catholic Church
1071 Delaware Ave. SE
404-627-7212
www.stmichaelatlanta.org

Most nightclub events are subject to cover charges.
* Denotes events sponsored or co-sponsored by the Atlanta Pride Committee.

Please see CALENDAR on Page 17



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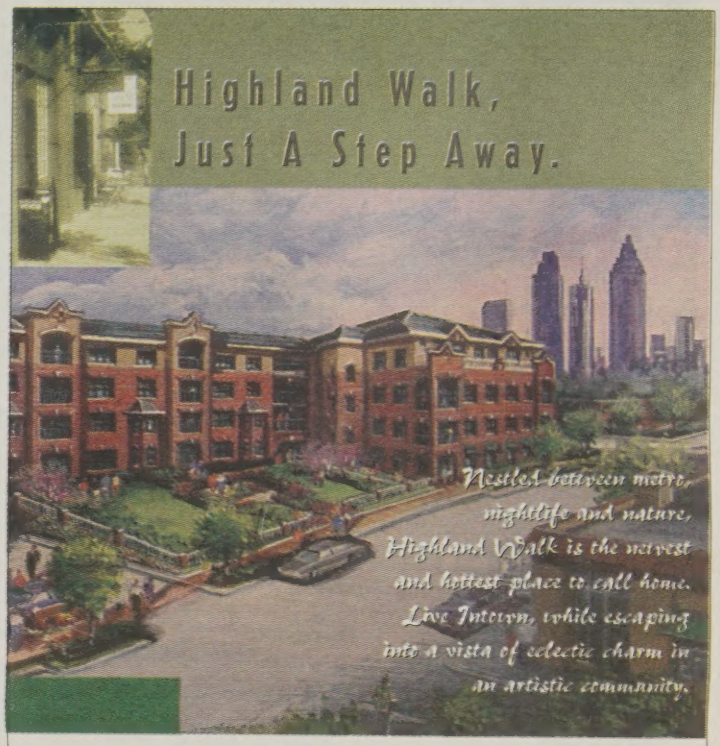
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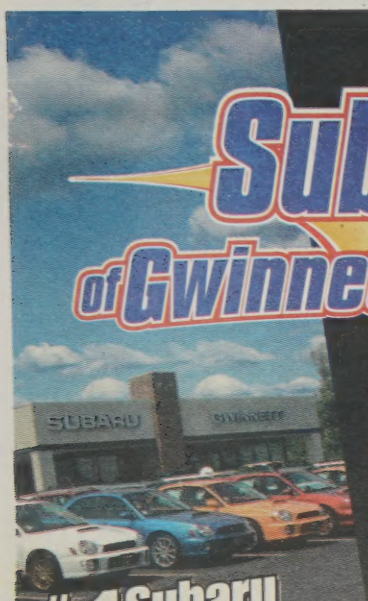

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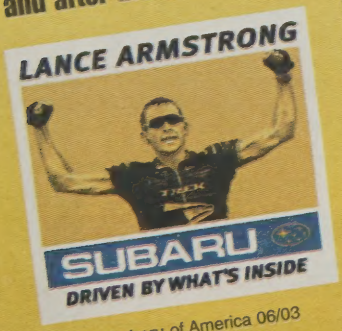


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PRIDE 2003

# Female performers form backbone of Pride line-up

## Musicians, male and female, laud diversity of Atlanta fest

By PENNY WHITE

The Pride festival's entertainment roster includes everything from a Neil Diamond cover band to a dance music diva, but female singer-songwriters — the popular "girls with guitars" of lesbian music lore — form the bulk of the stage line-up.

"About 95 percent of all [artist] submissions we receive are from women," explains Trisha Clymore, Atlanta Pride event director.

This year's festival features two stages: the Coca-Cola Main Stage and the Verizon Wireless Acoustic Stage, with women performers dominating both.

But the Pride Committee always encourages male performers to play the festival, and many of this year's performers say it is the diversity of the Atlanta event that attracts them, according to Clymore.

"Atlanta Pride is a great venue to showcase my music," says Tret Fure, a mainstay in the women's music scene who plays Atlanta Pride for the first time on Saturday afternoon.

"Most Pride audiences are different for me because I have the opportunity to play for more men," Fure says. "My audiences are predominantly women and I love the opportunity to offer my music for the world. My music is genderless and I want everyone to hear what it is I have to say."

### Female singers from 'folk' to 'feverishly fun'

Fure began playing piano at age five and writing songs at age seven. At 11, she picked up her first guitar and her life changed forever.

"I knew I wanted to be a folk singer," Fure says. "I have been playing guitar for 41 years. It has always been what I've wanted to do."

The group Halcyon, which consists of Deborah Hunseder and Stephanie Callahan, is no stranger to the Atlanta area or to Atlanta Pride.

"Atlanta is sort of a home away from home," quips Hunseder, whose band plays Pride on Sunday. "Gotta love that Southern hospitality."

Growing up, Hunseder played in bands, and Callahan sang in church (she's a recovering Southern Baptist). Callahan was on her way to college on a volleyball scholarship when the two met at a party after a softball tournament. Hunseder began playing her guitar and Callahan began singing.

"We instantly knew we had something special when we sang together," Hunseder says.

Pride performances are extra special for Halcyon, she says.

"There is so much incredibly positive energy in the air at Pride you can almost taste it," Hunseder says. "People who have so much in common coming together where they are the majority instead of the minority creates so much love and power. The audience gives us so much onstage, I wish everyone could experience what it feels like to be up there. They [the audience] are telling us they are proud of us and there's no better feeling in the world.

**Tret Fure**, well known in the 'women's music' scene, plays her first Atlanta Pride festival on Saturday.

Halcyon's **Deborah Hunseder** and **Stephanie Callahan** are no strangers to Atlanta audiences, calling the city their 'home away from home.'

"We may not be from Atlanta, but we have been made to feel as though we are."

Local artist Sue Witty agrees.

"It's an amazing event with a huge turnout and lots of positive energy," Witty says. "Folks are always so receptive to everyone's music. As a performer, that's tremendously appreciated."

Witty grew up in Yankee territory but currently calls Atlanta home. She was in choir and had a passion for writing poetry when she began playing guitar in college with aspirations to play gigs in local bars. She started out doing covers and progressively moved toward doing original material.

Witty loves the Pride audience.

"They're attentive, respectful, interested in listening to everyone's music," she says. "They're friendly and tend to approach me before and after the Pride gig just to talk and get to know me better. It's very affirming."

New York City band BETTY has headlined Pride festivals throughout their career, and band member Alyson Palmer describes Atlanta Pride as "feverishly more fun" than other Pride events.

The men of **Emerald Rose**, which specializes in 'American Celtic Folk Rock,' say that playing Pride is part of their commitment to diversity.

"There's something so warm, welcoming and ready-for-anything about Atlanta audiences that we adore," Palmer says. "From the Variety Playhouse to the Midtown Festival, BETTY's had some of our best times in your peach blossom of a town."

Palmer, Amy Ziff and Elizabeth Ziff got their start singing a cappella in three part harmony at a birthday party at the 9:30 club in Washington, D.C. The performance went so well that they have performed together ever since.

To show their appreciation for the Atlanta Pride audience, the women of BETTY perform a song they wrote especially for the festival. The song 'Georgia' debuts at Pride.

Atlanta's own Fat Chance plays their fourth Atlanta Pride this year. The seven-woman, all-lesbian band takes the stage complete with percussionist and drummer.

Band members are from different parts of the country, but each woman "chose Atlanta as a comfortable place to seek others with a compatible musical vision and as each member joined the creative process within the band, the dream came alive," says Lisa Robertson, vocalist.

"It may have seemed like a 'fat chance' years ago, but we do have something to write home about now," she says.

The women of Fat Chance worked hard in the studio with Don McCollister to have a Pride pre-release of their first full length CD, "Group Therapy."

### Male bands welcomed on festival stages

As one of only a handful of male bands or performers playing Pride, Emerald Rose doesn't find it an issue playing alongside so many female artists.

"I find it is much less of an issue than being a straight band at a gay event," says Brian Sullivan. "Sometimes, people don't understand that we honor diversity and freedom as much as we do."

Emerald Rose's Web site bills the group as "American Celtic Folk Rock." Band members hail from Scottish or Irish backgrounds, and Celtic music is the common thread that binds them. Influenced by the rock 'n' roll classics of the '60s, '70s and '80s, they play a unique blend of Celtic folk standards and folk rock with a Celtic twist.

The band consists of Brian Sullivan, Arthur Hinds, Larry Morris and Clyde Gilbert. They live within miles of each other in the north Georgia mountains and have been working as a full time band for a little over a year. Past gigs include DragonCon, Fantasm and a set for the cast and crew of "Lord of the Rings" at a party following the Oscars last March in Hollywood.

Emerald Rose loves playing Atlanta Pride, Sullivan says, because the group

Please see MUSIC LINE-UP on Page 20

PRIDE 2003

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BETTY, made up of Alyson Palmer, Amy Ziff and Elizabeth Ziff, performs 'Georgia' on Friday night, a special song written especially for Atlanta.

## Performers laud 'positive energy' at Pride

MUSIC LINE-UP, continued from Page 19

feels it is important to support cultural freedom, especially here at home.

"We do a lot of benefits every year, and we feel very strongly that freedom of speech, choice and love are worthy causes," he says. "In times of cultural stress, it is particularly important to stand up for our freedoms. We have many friends in the gay community. They support us and we support them."

Other male bands or performers playing Pride this year are Jeffrey Butts, Eric Himan, Kevin Durard, Anthony Antoine as well as Hot August Knights, a Neil Diamond tribute band.

### Gazebo becomes 'third venue' for music this year

In addition to the Coca-Cola Main Stage and the Verizon Wireless Acoustic stage, this year there is a third venue of sorts.

In the gazebo off the bridge in Piedmont Park, members of the Atlanta Freedom Marching band performs two sets on Saturday, one of jazz performances at 2 p.m. and a brass ensemble at 4 p.m.

Also on the agenda for the gazebo is a performance of EstroFest's "Dykes with Baggage," set for Saturday at 1 p.m. Tentatively scheduled for Sunday — although subject to change — are readings and performances by gay and lesbian poets.

The Pride Committee starts the process of selecting performers for each year's festival almost as soon as the last one ends.

"We start getting submissions in August or September," says Clymore, the event director. "In January, a committee listens to all the submissions, and the selection process really begins then."

Diversity, style and availability are the top three criteria considered by the committee, she says.

Performers receive monetary compensation ranging from $50 to $300 depending on the band's size and name recognition, Clymore says.

**MORE INFO**

For a complete schedule of the Pride stages, see Pages 13-17.

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Coca Cola Stage
Friday 9:00

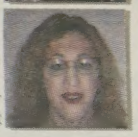
Gisio
Coca Cola Stage
Saturday 9:00

Raven
The
Starlight Cabaret
8:30 Sunday

Tret Fure
Coca Cola Stage
Saturday

Esera Tuaolo
Former NFL
Defensive Lineman

Tyler McClelland
Gay-Straight
Student Alliance


Monica F. Helms
Transgender
Activist

Kecia Cunningham
Decatur
City Commissioner

**COMMITMENT CEREMONY**
Friday, June 27 8:00pm
Sheraton Colony Square Hotel
www.atlantacouplestogether.org

**THE PRIDE VIGIL**
Friday June 27 7:30pm
Piedmont Park
For information: 404/ 874-7926

**VIP PARTY**
Saturday, June 28 6:30pm
Magnolia Hall *By Invitation*
($100+ Friend of PRIDE)

**DYKE MARCH**
Saturday, June 28 6:00pm
Charles Allen Gate

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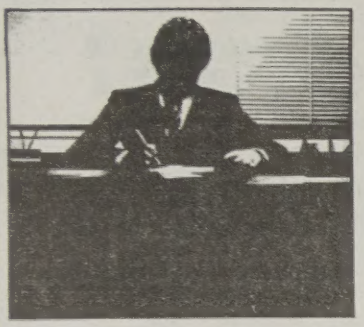

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PRIDE 2003

# Atlanta nightlife heats up this weekend

## Special events combine with full schedule at local bars

By JIM FARMER

If there is one weekend out of the year when it's appropriate to party Friday through Sunday, it's Pride weekend. The number of circuit party type events may not be as high as in previous years, but most local bars and gay-popular entertainment venues offer special events to commemorate Pride.

In a departure for Atlanta's usually male-focused nightlife scene, one of the biggest special events planned for Pride weekend targets women.

Dubbed "Heaven: Calling All Angels," the events sponsored by SWA-RA Productions are held in two parts. "Heaven" kicks off June 27 at 10 p.m. at Park Tavern, with participants encouraged to dress as angels. Those in wings don't have to wait in line and the sexiest angel wins $100.

The "Summer Fling" T-dance, with summer attire requested, takes place June 28 under a tent outside the Park Tavern doors and lasts from 5 p.m. until sunset.

More than 1,000 women from around the country are expected for the two parties, according to organizer Anna Ragghianti.

"We have planned this in response to the fact that there isn't much of a bar scene here for women in Atlanta," she said. "I think this is a great alternative. Even for the men so much is geared toward circuit parties. Here everyone can have a good time; you don't have to be cut and buff."

Although the parties are geared for women, men are allowed, Ragghianti said.

### Special dances, concerts

Atlanta's nightclubs offer dancing until the wee hours, but two special dances are also planned during Pride weekend.

YouthPride hosts a dance for the under-18 set at Blu on Friday night, starting at 8 p.m. The same night, Unity Fellowship Church of Atlanta hosts a GLBTQ Prom — complete with prom kings and queens — for folks of all ages who want to relive, or improve upon, the ubiquitous high school experience.

Atlanta is famed for its local music scene year-round, and Pride weekend is no exception. The all lesbian band "Group Sex," which plays fun rock and roll covers, brings its cult following to the the Echo Lounge on June 28 for a special Pride show.

For those who prefer a more mellow scene, the Coff-E House at Atlanta's First Existentialist Congregation hosts African-American performers features Adodi Muse, Estrogen and Malika on Friday night, presented by Charis Circle.

On Sunday, the First Existentialist Cong-regation hosts the lesbian ensemble Melodivas and songwriter Amy Carol Webb for a performance at 7:30 p.m. followed by a complimentary dessert reception.

The lesbians of 'Group Sex' hit the Echo Lounge on Saturday night for a special Pride weekend concert. (Photo courtesy Group Sex)

### Packed schedule at local night clubs

Atlanta's roster of gay bars and clubs host a series of special events for Pride. Just down the street from Piedmont Park, Blake's on the Park (227 10th St.) presents the Pride-themed "Hooray for Hollywood" at 9:30 p.m. June 29.

The Armory (836 Juniper St.) presents the Mr. Georgia Pageant at 8:30 p.m. June 27. It's a preliminary for the International Mr. Hotlanta Contest, taking place during the Hotlanta River Expo, and features the normal bevy of hunky men. Attendees can visit Backstreet Atlanta (845 Peachtree St.) afterwards with no cover charge.

Backstreet, the 24-hour night club, hosts special DJs Bill Berdeaux and Rob Reum over the weekend, in addition to the popular Charlie Brown's Cabaret and a return visit from the Armorettes on June 29.

Burkharts Pub (1492-F Piedmont Ave.) hosts a special show the evening of June 29. In lieu of its usual Sunday night

Please see NIGHTLIFE on Page 39

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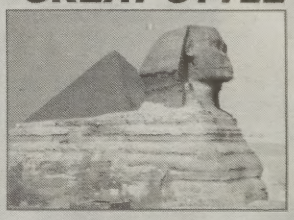

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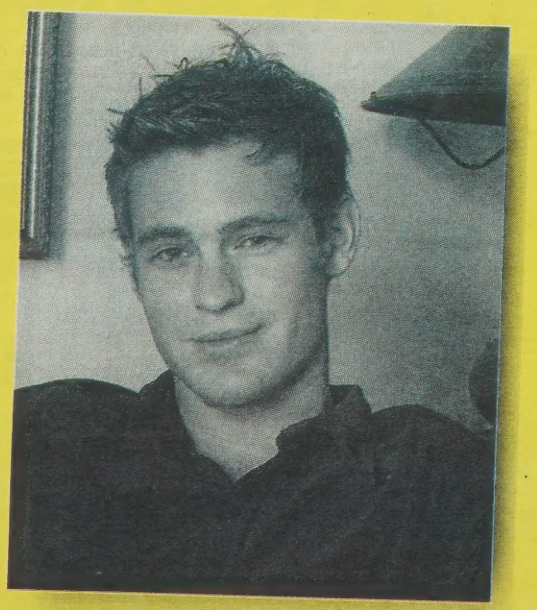

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PRIDE 2003

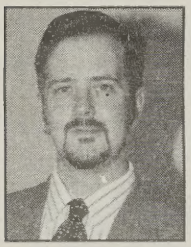
# Memories

*Atlanta City Council President* ***Cathy Woolard****, Georgia's first openly gay elected official*

I hardly remember my first Pride — I must have been three years old at the time. The earliest one I can remember was at the State Capitol. Several of my friends were running around like crazy trying to be the crowd and the speakers at the same time. I remember being thankful for the shade of the trees and thinking it was a lot of fun.

***Jeff Graham****, AIDS Survival Project executive director*

My favorite Pride memory was the year that the Pride Committee organized a fireworks display. I think the year was 1993. It was one of the first years that Pride had grown to over 100,000 people. It had rained earlier in the evening, driving most folks from the park. I remember standing huddled under a tent and standing on top of a table.



At a certain point, the rain stopped and the fireworks suddenly burst through the night. I'll never forget the feeling of complete joy when I realized that these fireworks were happening for no other reason than to celebrate everything that made us queer.

I'm so glad that I was able to attend Pride when it was still small and so very grassroots.

***Anthony Morris & John Gibson****, playwrights and owners of Peachtree Playhouse and Ansley Park Playhouse*

It was one of those hot, humid days in June. All of a sudden the skies opened up and a downpour started.

We ran into the nearest tent to get out of the rain only to find ourselves in the middle of a mass commitment ceremony. Anthony whispered to me, "you want to go get a funnel cake?" I turned and said out loud, "I do" and the minister declared us an official union.

Between the smell of stale beer and hot sweaty people, it was the most romantic day of my life and nine years later, I'm still waiting on that funnel cake.

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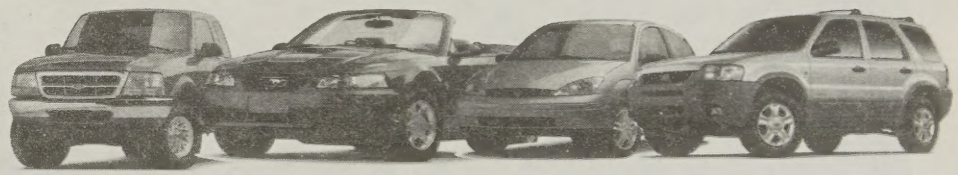

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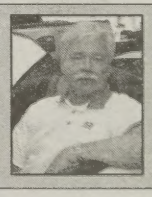

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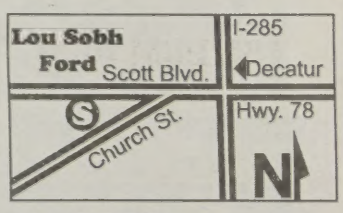


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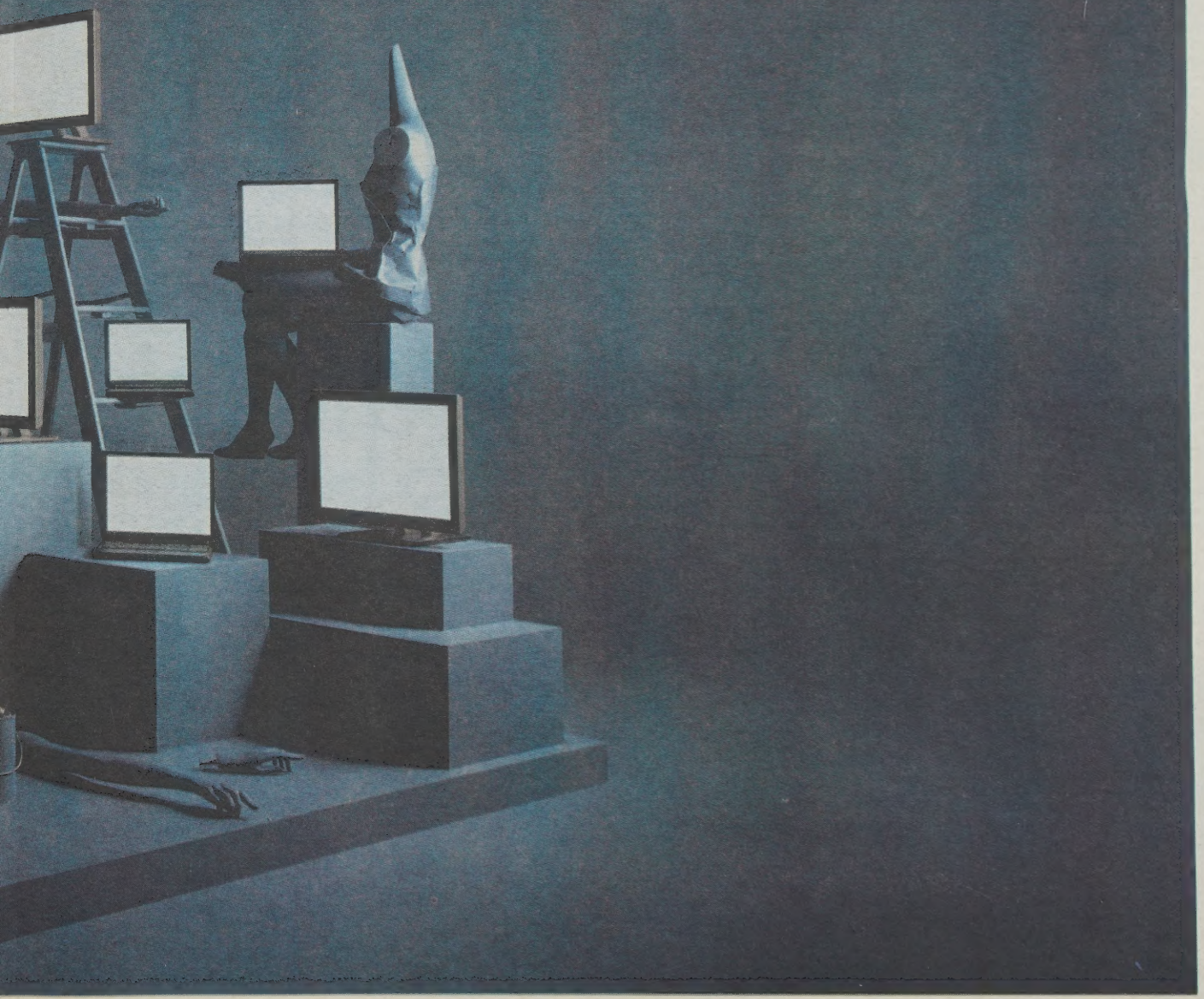

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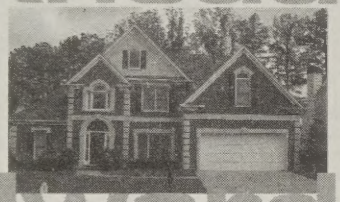
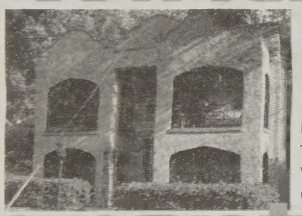


**windward**



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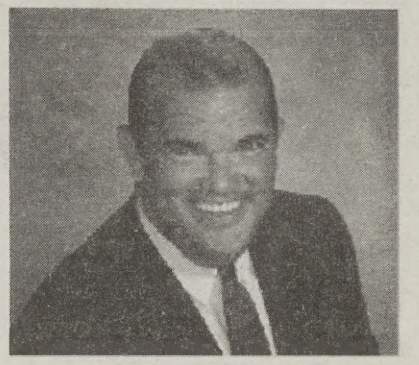

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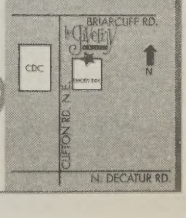

PRIDE 2003

# Candlelight vigil expands focus

## With new location, Friday event not just about AIDS

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Eighteen years after the first community AIDS memorial was held as part of Atlanta Pride, the event gets a radical makeover this year, moving from its traditional location in John Howell Park and expanding its focus beyond just HIV.

The new "Pride Vigil" takes place Friday evening in Piedmont Park. While those lost to HIV and AIDS will remain a key part of the memorial, "what we wanted to do this year is really allow the entire community to come together and remember everyone who is no longer with us," said Jeff Graham, AIDS Survival Project executive director.

The vigil was moved to Piedmont Park, site of the rest of Pride weekend festivities, "because we wanted to make it more accessible for more people," Graham said. "We didn't want people to feel like they have to leave the park early in order to get over to the vigil."

For the first time, the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative joins ASP as co-sponsors of the vigil.

"It was a very natural fit for us to have a more public way of marking the women in our community who have died," said ALCI Executive Director Linda Ellis, noting that the group has held a smaller, "more intimate" annual memorial service in the past.

Formerly held in Virginia-Highlands, the Pride Vigil moves to Piedmont Park this year. (Photo by Trina O'Connor)

The partnership offers an opportunity for education, Ellis said. "One thing we are continuously reminded of is the lesbian community has a great deal to learn from gay men and their ability to have taken the awfulness of HIV and AIDS and taught themselves how to advocate for themselves and claim their right to good healthcare," she said.

At ALCI, "we have gotten good support and friendship from those in the HIV community, and it is time to stand with them," Ellis said. "This feels right."

This year's vigil, which officially begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Verizon Wireless Acoustic Stage, will start 15 minutes earlier with the traditional litany of names, expanded to include those who have passed away from causes besides just HIV.

As in the past, the vigil will feature performances by the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus. But instead of various communities affected by HIV, the speakers will instead focus "on the history of the LGBT community in Atlanta — both the politics as well as the personalities, from pre-Stonewall to the present," Graham said.

In addition to Graham and Ellis, speakers confirmed at press time include lesbian activist and historian Maria Helena Dolan, Daniel Bates of National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities, Monica Helms of Trans=Action, Asha Leong from Lambda Legal, and Rev. Sally Purvis.

Speaches will take a decade-by-decade approach to Atlanta history, with additional personal remembrances intertwined in the more formal remarks. The evening will end with a candle-lighting ceremony conducted by Purvis.

While the mood is somber, "we want to celebrate these lives and their commitments to our community and our movement," Graham said, "and then take their memories and their spirit and energy through the rest of the celebration of Pride weekend."

**MORE INFO**

**Pride Vigil**
June 27, 7:30 p.m.
Verizon Wireless Acoustic Stage
Piedmont Park
www.aidssurvivalproject.org
www.alci.org

# Commitment ceremony honors couples

## New home for annual exchange of vows

By VAN GOWER

Nearly 115 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered couples will publicly pledge their love and commitment on June 27 in the annual Pride Commitment Ceremony, sponsored by Atlanta Couples Together.

"This is our most important community service of the year," said Amy Norm, chair of Atlanta Couples Together. "It's a long standing tradition in conjunction with Atlanta Pride."

The ceremony, added to the schedule of Pride events in 1991, was originally held in a small park that was secluded from spectators and the media.

"At that time, we said no to the media, no to photographers, and it was held in this park because there hadn't been a feeling that the couples were ready to be as public about their commitment," said Donna Narducci, executive director of the Atlanta Pride Committee. "But we realized that the ceremony was about pride and it was later moved into a more open location."

The ceremony sends an important message, organizers said. "None of us can be legally married, so having the commitment ceremony is the next best thing," Narducci said.

By conducting the ceremony, Atlanta Couples Together provides an opportunity to gay couples that is perhaps unique to larger metropolitan cities.

"For the people who come to this ceremony it's monumentally important," Norm said. "For those who may come from other cities where they may not have access to a gay-friendly minister, it's a chance to stand in front of a representative of the church and be united in a way they can't do anywhere else."

Rev. Jay Nealy and Rev. Renee DuBois will perform the ceremony, and a professional wedding photographer will be on hand.

There will also be wedding cake and refreshments, a cash bar, flowers, music by the Melodivas and drawings for gifts. Couples who pre-register will receive personalized commitment certificates after the ceremony.

The ceremony moves out of Piedmont Park this year to Pride's host hotel, the Sheraton at Colony Square.

More than 100 couples are expected to join their lives Friday evening in the annual Pride Commitment Ceremony.

**MORE INFO**

**Pride Commitment Ceremony**
June 27, 8 p.m.
Sheraton Midtown Atlanta at Colony Square,
Crown Room
188 14th St.
$15/couple pre-registration,
$20/couple at the door
404-365-2455
Pre-register: commitment@atlantacouplestogether.org

After dancing on the YouthPride float in last year's parade, gay and questioning young people will have their own dance venue this year, as the non-profit group hosts an under-18 dance at Blu. (Photo courtesy of YouthPride)

# Blu opens doors to YouthPride

## Friday night dance at gay club just for under-18 set

By VAN GOWER

Area gay youth, usually shut out of most of Atlanta's nightlife scene, will have their own venue Friday night when YouthPride hosts a Pride dance at the popular gay club Blu, complete with a DJ, lights and tons of action.

"In this city alone, when you look at social alternatives for teenagers, the options are few and far between," said Nicole Pitts, outreach and volunteer manager for YouthPride. "Every now and then you can find something. But it's hard finding something if you're under 21, and under 18 is even harder. During Pride we're the only thing for them to do."

YouthPride periodically sponsors dances for gay teens, Pitts said, but this dance is "significant because YouthPride makes such a presence during Pride."

Blu, the club where the dance will take place, is not charging YouthPride for use of the space. It will also provide support staff and open its bar for Cokes. Blu does not serve alcohol and none will be available during the dance.

Pitts said two security guards will also be on hand.

"We typically do our dance parties on Saturday nights because we can do more outreach and distribute flyers in the park that day," Pitts said. "But Blu is not open on Fridays, so that was their night to give us the club for free."

YouthPride will distribute flyers about the dance to teens at Friday evening's events in Piedmont Park. The dance has already been advertised in-house at YouthPride's facility in Decatur, Pitts said, but they are also canvassing the park to let youth visiting from out of town know about the dance.

About 150 youth are expected to attend the event. The event is for youth only and no one over the age of 17 will be permitted, Pitts said.

**MORE INFO**

**YouthPride Dance**
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YouthPride Dance
June 27, 8-11 p.m.

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Women who identify as 'dykes' will bare all or otherwise show their Pride in the annual Atlanta Dyke March on Pride Saturday. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

# Dyke march showcases diversity

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

An Atlanta Pride tradition that began in earnest after the 1993 March on Washington will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Saturday, as hundreds of women take to streets around Piedmont Park for the annual Dyke March.

"There is such a variety of women that participate, and as a woman, I appreciate that," said Trisha Clymore, Pride event director. "I think it is educational for our community to talk about why it happens."

Two decades ago, in 1983, the now-defunct Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance hosted a candlelight Dyke March from Candler Park to Little Five Points during Pride weekend. The event was resurrected 10 years later by Atlanta women who were energized by the Dyke March held in downtown Washington, D.C., in April 1993 during the national lesbian and gay rights march there.

Featuring a range of women from topless teens to breast-feeding mothers, the Atlanta Dyke March has been held every year since, stepping off from the Charles Allen entrance to Piedmont Park at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

"It's part of Pride, but it has a life of its own," said Clymore, noting that the Atlanta Pride Committee secures the permit for the annual march, but relies on a fluid group of activists to organize it.

The event — known for its shirtless women, in-your-face slogans, drumming and signature fire-eating — offers a more overtly political stance than the cheerful floats in Sunday's Pride Parade.

"There's an edge to it," Clymore said.

Last year's event drew about 300 women.

**MORE INFO**

**Dyke March**
June 28, 6 p.m.
Charles Allen entrance to Piedmont Park

PRIDE 2003

# Kids' events include games, crafts

## Clown, story-teller also on tap for kids 'gayby' boom

By VAN GOWER

For the seventh year, children have a place to indulge their playful spirits at the Atlanta Pride festival. The Children's Area, which is open on Saturday and Sunday in Piedmont Park, is located near the new bridge at Lake Clara Meer.

Event organizers plan face painting, crafts, games, a Moonwalk, bingo, a clown balloon artist and storytelling for this year's Pride.

"There are a lot more parents in the park," said Trisha Clymore, Atlanta Pride event director. "This is a place where their children can get entertained and participate in appropriate ways for children."

A variety of events are offered this year, Clymore said.

"We've added a storyteller who hasn't been there in a couple of years, and of course the Moonwalk continues to be very popular," she said.

The Children's Area, added to the festival lineup in 1997, arose out of a perceived need for inclusion of children's entertainment among the more adult themes of Pride.

Initially, the Children's Area was only open for a couple of hours on Saturday. It has since expanded to include Sunday in its schedule.

When asked what message children get from being at Pride, Clymore said they have something different in mind than their parents.

The popular Moonwalk is one of several activities scheduled for children at Atlanta Pride. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

"They're bored. I know my own son wouldn't see it as a significant thing as far as the Gay Pride aspect," she said. "Walking around looking at a booth with t-shirts and rainbow wear is not exciting for them, but if they know that they can go play in an hour, that means something to them."

### MORE INFO

**Atlanta Pride Children's Area**
June 28, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Bingo: 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Storytelling by Barry Mann Stewart: 3 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
June 29, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Bingo: 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.

## Early-morning run aids charities

By RYAN LEE

Whether you're looking to break in a new pair of running shoes or desperately trying to run away from a Saturday-morning hangover, the 13th Annual Pride Run/Walk is an invigorating event that sprinkles a little exercise into Pride weekend festivities.

The five kilometer run/walk — presented by Front Runners Atlanta, a gay and lesbian fitness group — starts at 8 a.m. Saturday and spirals through Grant Park. Organizers expect 800 participants for this year's run, with proceeds benefiting the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative and the local chapter of The NAMES Project, which sponsors the AIDS memorial quilt.

"We're very happy with all the people who come out in support of the Pride Run," said Mike Spencer, Front Runners president. "The support is always so tremendous."

Last year, 770 people entered the event, which raised $12,000, according to organizers. The Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative, AIDS Treatment Initiatives and YouthPride each received $4,000 from Front Runners Atlanta. In the past 13 years, the Pride Run has raised more than $100,000 for various charities.

Participants compete in nine age divisions for a variety of prizes provided by the event's 11 sponsors.

But those who are less inclined to actually race needn't worry. No one runs or walks away from the Pride Run empty-handed. An official Pride Run 2003 T-shirt goes to each participant upon paying the $18 registration fee.

The annual 5-kilometer Pride Run attracts runners and walkers of all skill levels.

If your idea of a good time doesn't involve sweating and panting, the Pride Run also features an exhibit of classic model cars, via the Dogwood Chapter of the Lambda Car Club International, a car club for gay men and lesbians.

The Atlanta Police Department's gay liaison officer, Sgt. Connie Locke, is this year's guest of honor. She is responsible for starting the run/walk near the Cyclorama and the Zoo Atlanta entrance. Locke, a 14-year veteran with Atlanta's police force, was appointed gay liaison officer by Atlanta's Police Chief Richard Pennington last October.

Locke is also scheduled to deliver a speech at the pre-Pride Run Pasta Dinner Friday night at a location to be announced. The dinner starts at 7 p.m. and requires additional registration and costs.

### MORE INFO

**Pride 5K Run/Walk**
June 28
Registration, 7 a.m.
Run starts, 8 a.m.
Grant Park at Cyclorama
www.frontrunnersatlanta.org

## Sports groups team up for Pride

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

Amid the booths and swarms of people that fill the park on Pride weekend, several gay sports teams are out in full force at the pool and on the playing fields.

The Hotlanta Softball League joins the ranks of Atlanta Rainbow Trout, a gay aquatics club and Hotlanta Volleyball Association this year by using Pride weekend as an opportunity to showcase the camaraderie, athleticism and sheer fun of their sports organizations.

Softball and volleyball players hit the grass playing games Saturday, and the Rainbow Trout hosts several other gay Atlanta sports teams at the Piedmont Park Pool for unusual and fun-spirited relays — and, if last year is any indication, spontaneous chicken fights.

"Last year, sheer wackiness comes to mind," said Andrea Timpeiro, Trout team member. "All the other teams were having a good time in the water."

For the second annual SPLASH! competition, the Trout challenged team representatives from Hotlanta Soccer Association, Atlanta Team Tennis Association and Atlanta Front Runners to exhibition relays.

One such relay, "Dress for Success," sticks out in Timpeiro's mind as a highlight from last year.

"We had some guys raid some closets and come up with some interesting sorts of costumes for people to wear, and they swam across the pool and stripped out and exchanged it with the next person," she said. "By the end of the race last year, there were only portions of the costumes left."

In the big, grass bowl near the 14th Street entrance to Piedmont Park, Hotlanta Softball teams engage in three softball games, a women's game, a divisions C/D game and a divisions A/B game, said Sybil Smith, HSL board member.

"We want to show people having a good time playing softball with other gay folks," she said.

Across the playing field in the same grass bowl as the softball games, Hotlanta Volleyball hosts its seventh annual volleyball tournament, aptly dubbed "Freedom to Be Champions Tournament."

The Atlanta Rainbow Trout joins other gay Atlanta sporting teams in the pool at Piedmont Park for wacky water competitions Saturday from 3-5 p.m. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

### MORE INFO

**Splash! Relays**
June 28, 3-5 p.m.
Piedmont Park Pool
Atlanta Rainbow Trout
404-412-7777
www.atlantarainbowtrout.com

**Softball Exhibition Games**
June 28, Women's game at 1 p.m.
Men's games at 2 and 3 p.m.
Piedmont Park Softball Fields
Hotlanta Softball League
404-875-9881
www.hotlantasoftball.org

**Freedom to Be Champions Volleyball Tournament**
June 28, 8-4 p.m.
Piedmont Park softball and soccer fields
Hotlanta Volleyball Association
770-621-5062
www.hotlantavolleyball.org

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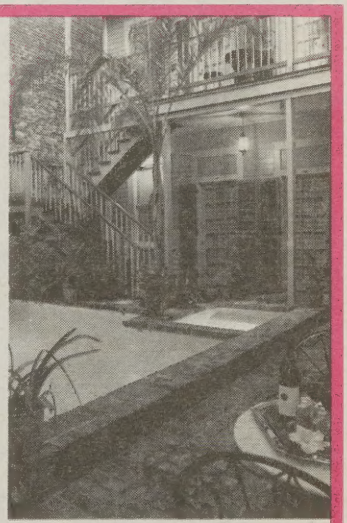

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PRIDE 2003

# Non-profit leaders chosen as parade marshals

## Honor recognizes leadership on health, youth issues

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

On the surface, Jim Marks and Linda Ellis seem worlds apart.

Marks, known to thousands of Atlantans as drag personality Bubba D. Licious, spends more than half his nights every week in a frizzy blonde wig and a dress.

At the same time Bubba hosts a Bingo night or best butt contest, Ellis may very well be changing the diaper of her toddler son, Sam, or having family time with Sam, his four-year-old big brother Brogan and her partner of 15 years, Lesley Brogan.

One thing Ellis and Marks do have in common is that the Pride committee selected them to be Pride grand marshals in honor of the work each has done to build gay non-profit organizations, according to Pride Event Director Trisha Clymore.

The similarities may stop there, the honorees joked.

"I'll probably be the more underdressed of the two of us," said Ellis, executive director of the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative.

But Marks will not ride in the parade as Bubba D. Licious, because the Pride Committee chose to honor him as Jim, the man behind Bubba and the chief financial officer and director of operations for the NAMES Project Foundation.

Forty hours every week, Marks works a 9-to-5 job, educating children and adults about AIDS through his work at the NAMES Project, a non-profit organization now based in Atlanta that maintains the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

"You can go in with the quilt and explain to them about the behavior of people," Marks said. "It allows the awareness and education in places you can't go with a condom, like the fourth grade."

Once night falls, Jim transforms into Bubba D. Licious, in what Marks estimates to be about 40 minutes, though Bubba can do it in 15 if he's in a pinch.

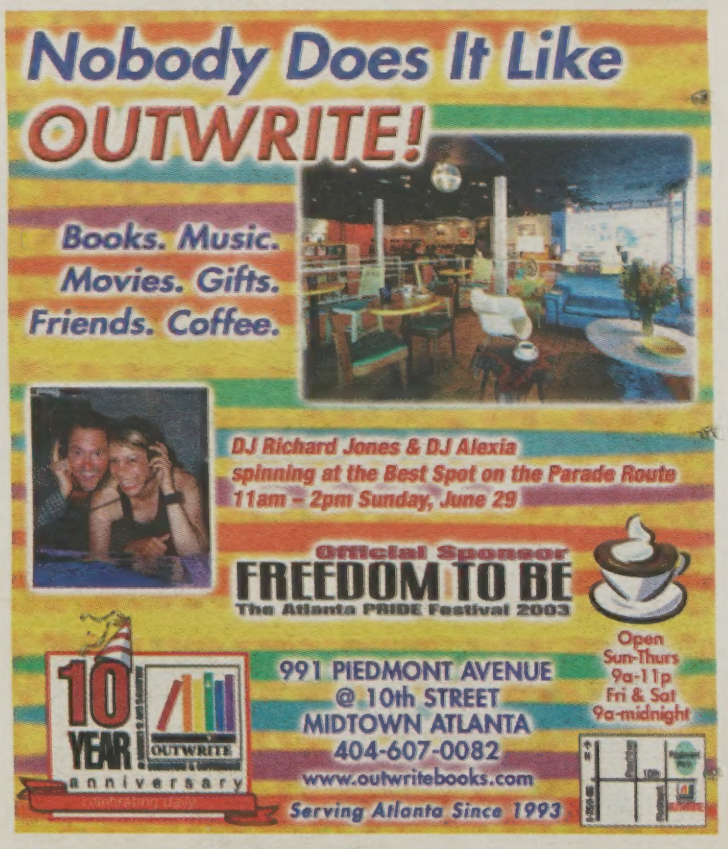
"As pretty or well-dressed as I sometimes try to be, I'm still a man wearing a dress that has no desires to be anything other than a man wearing a dress," he said.

Bubba hasn't always been as glamorous as he tries to be today. Marks auditioned Bubba with "tennis shoes, bad wigs, and outlet clothing" to become part of the Armorettes in 1989, just months after moving to Atlanta and coming out of the closet.

"Having started as an Armorette, it

Please see GRAND MARSHALS on Page 43

The 2003 Pride Committee selected **Jim Marks** (center) and **Linda Ellis** (right) as the grand marshals for this year's Pride parade. Also pictured is **Bubba D. Licious** (left), the drag persona of Jim Marks that helps Marks raise money. (Photos by R.O. Youngblood; photo illustration by John Nail)



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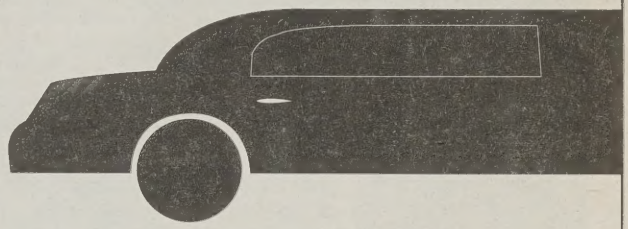

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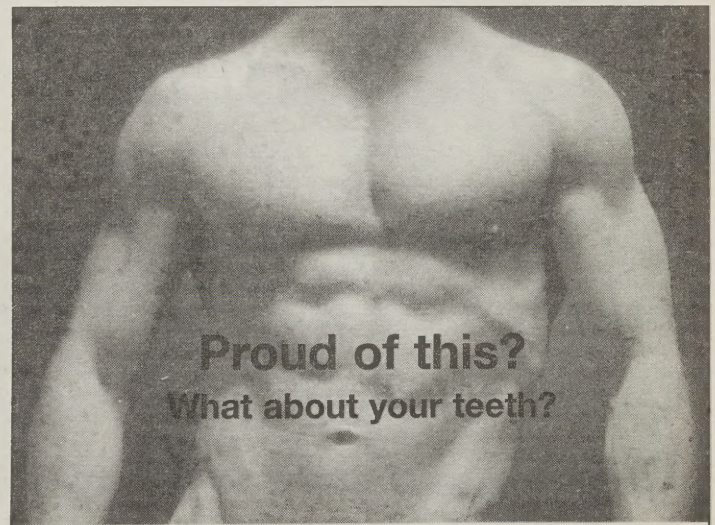


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PRIDE 2003

# Couples tapped as honorary grand marshals

## 50-year male couple, lesbian moms find strength in relationships

By PENNY WHITE

Atlanta 1953. You and your gay partner are moving into your first apartment together. Can you imagine the size of that closet?

Bill Weaver and Doug Johnson, one of two couples serving as honorary grand marshals of this year's Atlanta Pride Parade, know firsthand.

"In 1953, there was no choice but to be in the closet," Weaver said. "It was unheard of except when they arrested someone in Piedmont Park or something. There was no acknowledgement of the gay community in Atlanta. Everyone was closeted."

Even now, friends of Johnson and Weaver from that time period remain closeted.

"That's why I don't believe in our lifetime there will be a retirement community for gays," Weaver said. "For someone our ages to live there would be admitting to being gay. Possibly by the next generation."

The couple met while attending the University of Florida. Johnson was brought to Weaver's house as an unexpected dinner guest. They were best friends for six years before pursuing a relationship.

"We went our separate ways for awhile after college," Johnson explained. "Then we both landed jobs in Atlanta and in 1953 we moved into our first apartment together in what is now Midtown."

This year, they celebrate their 50th anniversary together. It will be no small celebration.

"Being chosen as grand marshals is part of the celebration," they said simultaneously. They also plan to visit Greece in September, and a party at Lowe Gallery on Bennett Street will top off their golden anniversary.

The secret to their longevity lies in the intimacy of their relationship, Johnson said. "There is more than one kind of intimacy," he said. "There is companionship; common social interests, common intellectual, common in emotional support.

"The sexual curve starts high then dwindles over the years. The companionship bond may start small then gradually build. At some point the two will cross. If the companionship is strong enough when the sex dwindles, the relationship has a chance to survive," he said.

**Bill Weaver** and **Doug Johnson** moved in together in 1953, celebrating their golden anniversary this year. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

They were selected as honorary grand marshals after a nomination and voting process.

"Nomination forms are on the home page of Atlanta Pride usually in January," explained Trisha Clymore, event director for Atlanta Pride. "We also mail out forms to about 450 businesses and organizations within the community."

When those forms are returned, the nominees are forwarded to the board and the board votes on who will be grand marshals.

"Grand marshals must be gay or lesbian and part of the GLBT community in Atlanta," Clymore said. "Honorary grand marshals can be from outside Georgia, and they can be straight supporters of the GLBT community."

Usually, individuals are grand marshals. It is sheer coincidence that this year's honorary grand marshals are two couples.

Along with Johnson and Weaver, partners Susan Borden and Erin Musselwhite will be honored at this year's parade. The two met in Midtown in 1995, when Borden was working as bartender at Dupree's Tavern, where Musselwhite was a regular customer.

"Sparks flew," Musselwhite said, and the two have been together eight years.

Borden and Musselwhite started My Sister's Room, a lesbian bar, in Midtown in 1996 with the help of a friend, Richard Dupree. In 1998, they dissolved the partnership with Dupree and got a silent partner to relocate the popular club to Decatur.

Both women said they are excited to be grand marshals.

"It is an honor," Borden said. "We're very happy and proud to tell everybody.

"So's my mother!" she laughs.

The two women are equally proud of their 21-month-old daughter, Sela Ray Borden.

Please see GAY COUPLES on Page 43

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PRIDE 2003

# Former NFL player reaches out to youth

ESERA TUAOLO, continued from Page 9

He said his former NFL teammates are surprisingly positive about his revelation that gays are among their ranks.

"The guys I played with, some have called and have been very supportive and apologetic," he said. "I tell them I'm not a victim. I wouldn't be the person I am now had I not gone through all that."

## Still a long way to go

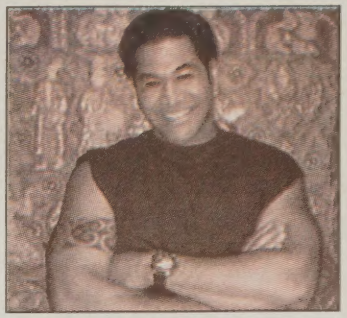
"At first, it was personal — for me and my family," Tuaolo said about coming out. "But now that everything has calmed down, I see that I have a platform I need to address."

His platform is to ease the anxiety young gays sometimes feel, and he hopes he can keep them from experiencing the isolation and fear he did growing up. He said his greatest outreach occurred when he returned to his alma mater, Oregon State University, where more than 20 football players gathered with him to address students about homophobia on campus.

"I want the younger generation to know that they are not alone," Tuaolo said, adding that he hopes youth will educate themselves on those who paved the way before him.

"You come out when it's your time," he said. "You come out when you feel safe and comfortable. My coming out was the same process everyone else goes through; the only thing that made it different was my job.

"I have the opportunity to break down walls, and it would be a shame for me not to do anything with that," Tuaolo said.



Despite encountering homophobia in the National Football League, **Esera Tuaolo** makes it clear that he is 'not a victim' as he works to educate student athletes. (Photo by Jeff Loftis, courtesy www.eseratuaolo.com)

**MORE INFO**
Esera Tualo
Sunday, 3:30 p.m.
Coca-Cola Main Stage
www.eseratuaolo.com

# Bars host variety of Pride events

NIGHTLIFE, continued from Page 31

"Gospel Girls" performances, the club hosts "The Jubilee Show," which club officials say is similar to "The Gospel Girls," including church songs, special guests and post-Pride merriment.

The new gay sports bar Woofs (2425 Piedmont Road) has an earlier-than usual breakfast Sunday morning just before the parade kicks off, while Hoedowns (931 Monroe Drive) has its usual Sunday night cookout at 6 p.m., as well as promotions, giveaways and raffles all weekend.

The Atlanta Eagle (308 Ponce De Leon Ave.) hosts a cookout for the Southern Bears just after the Sunday daytime events are wrapping up, while the Heretic hosts its usual High Energy Dance that night.

One of the biggest events of the weekend might prove to be at Vision Nightclub & Lounge (1068 Peachtree St.), formerly known as Kaya, which now hosts "Double Vision" T-dances every other Sunday (including June 29). Down the street, Blu (960 Spring St.) offers the usual weekend high-octane dance parties, DJs and shirtless boys.

Among the many other bars, Le Buzz in Marietta (585 Franklin Rd.) continues its Tim Jones Comedy Cabaret on Saturday night June 26 at 11 p.m. featuring a mixture of drag kings and queens.

The lesbian bar My Sister's Room (222 East Howard Ave., Decatur) presents the America Drag King show on Friday night; openers for the show were chosen at the club's recent "Sing Out Sister" event, where judges included Vanessa Olivarez from "American Idol." The club hosts a dance party Saturday night.

Backstreet and other Atlanta nightclubs are ready to pack in the revelers who don't want their Pride partying to end at Piedmont Park. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

**MORE INFO**
For more information about nightlife events, see the calendar on pages 13-17.

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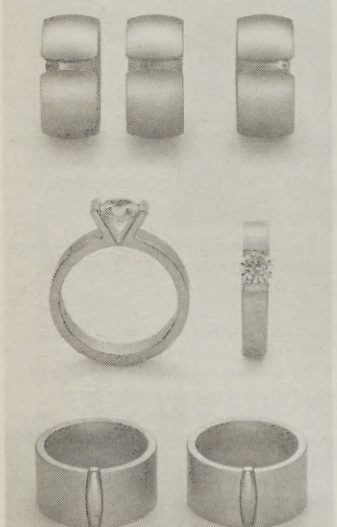
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# PRIDE 2003

## Memories

***Dallas Denny**, Transgender Tapestry Journal editor, Fantasia Fair director, Gender Education & Advocacy board member*

I remember, in 1992 or so, walking up to the large PFLAG booth and asking one of their volunteers if they provided support to trans families. For the next few minutes, the booth was a-twitter as the PFLAGers tried to figure it out among themselves.

The ultimate answer was no, but it was clear they had never even considered the issue. They suggested I talk to the people at PFLAG headquarters, which I did. I also went to a meeting of PFLAG Atlanta to talk about trans issues.

Within a year, PFLAG's national headquarters was sending out information on transgender issues. Today, 10 years down the road, PFLAG National and PFLAG Atlanta have a history of nearly ten years of offering support to transgendered people and their families.

***Linda Bryant**, Charis Books & More co-owner*

What I remember about 1993 Pride and the Dyke March is that my son had just graduated from high school. Though I had been out as a lesbian since 1978, I had made the decision to stay out of the newspaper, etc. until he was out of high school.

That year, Wendy and I attended the Dyke March and knew that the television cameras were running. We marched with other women we knew from my years at Charis and it was great fun. Later we learned that one of the women we marched so happily with had lost her job after we were all on the news.

Years later, Sherry Emory and I were asked to be grand marshals at Pride, and we loved it.

***Donna Narducci**, Atlanta Pride Committee executive director*

My fondest memories and what I look forward to every year is on Sunday afternoon, watching for what seems like hours folks just pouring into the park from the parade. There we are in all of our diversity, enjoying ourselves and being in the company of our community.

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PRIDE 2003

# Grand marshals share focus on health issues

GRAND MARSHALS, continued from Page 33

was immediately embedded in me that I was doing this to help others, not for my own personal gain," he said.

As a pair, Jim and Bubba have had a hand in raising more than $3.5 million for local and national organizations and events in the "GLBT community," Marks said.

Ellis' specialty doesn't involve sequins or pumps, but a knack for turning the organizations she leads into household names, Clymore said.

Before becoming executive director of ALCI in January 2002, Ellis oversaw income development efforts as executive director at YouthPride — helping the organization's budget grow from $12,000 in 1997 to $375,000 in 2001.

"Linda took YouthPride and moved it from being an unrecognizable organization to one that was becoming quite prominent," Clymore said.

The work that Ellis did with YouthPride also fits with Pride's theme, "Freedom to Be."

"What we were doing was incredibly radical," Ellis said. "We were providing gay and lesbian youth with an opportunity to be themselves."

Under Ellis' direction, YouthPride acquired funding from a national organization to put on social events specifically for gay youth, a radically normal idea, she said.

The same goes for her work with ALCI.

"Everything you needed to work with was there," Ellis said. "What was needed was to share the secret."

ALCI provides support and resources to lesbians affected by cancer, and educates women's health care providers in clinics across the state about ways to structure a practice that will be open and inclusive of lesbians, right down to the variety of magazines displayed in the waiting room.

Ellis, in a committed relationship with a woman for 15 years, gets personal with the health care workers she trains.

"Every time I go and have to figure out if I'm married, single, or divorced, it pisses me off," she said. "That is enough to keep some women from going to the doctor."

If ALCI is successful in connecting women who have qualms about being out to a doctor to a health care provider that is educated to treat lesbians, then more women's lives could be saved because women who have cancer will be diagnosed earlier, Ellis said.

"We are trying to take us to a point of normalcy, so we as adult lesbians can be comfortable seeking care and being sure we can get the care we need," she said.

# Coincidence that honorees are couples

GAY COUPLES, continued from Page 37

"She is amazing," Borden said, showing off photos.

"She adapted so well," Musselwhite echoed.

The two became parents through international adoption. "We started in March of last year," Borden said. "It was a ten month process. The only grueling part is the waiting."

They brought Sela Ray home from Russia on Dec. 27, the best Christmas present they could have asked for.

"Since we've become parents, we've seen a lot more couples and single gay people adopting children," Borden said. "We've been focused on that for the past few years ... it's just amazing to see how many people are doing this."

By summer's end, the family name will legally be changed to Musselwhite, and they get a good laugh when the question, "How do you manage to stay together?" is posed.

"Communication," is the first word from Musselwhite.

"Trust," is another word uttered by Borden.

"We find it to be an advantage that we work together, even though a lot of people look at it negatively," Musselwhite said. "We are each other's favorite person."

**Erin Musselwhite** and **Susan Borden** own My Sister's Room, the popular lesbian bar, and are proud mothers to daughter Sela Ray. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

"What we bring to the table businesswise is a perfect balance," Borden added. "What she does, I don't like to do and what I do she doesn't like to do.

"We made a pact that leaving is never an option. Whatever it is we're gonna exhaust all efforts to work it out."

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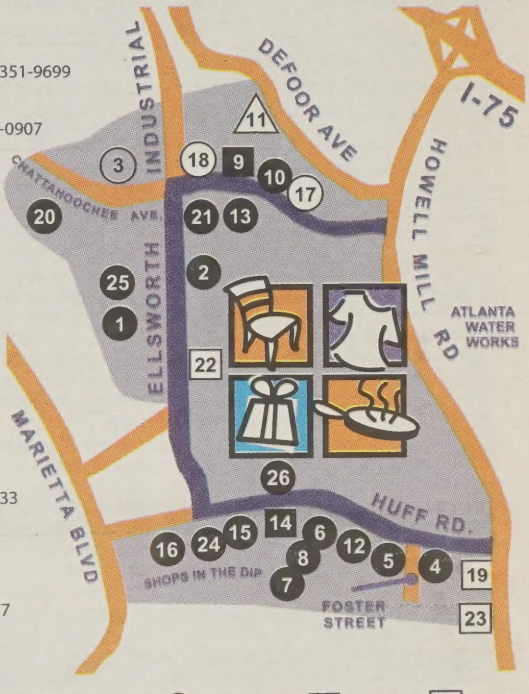

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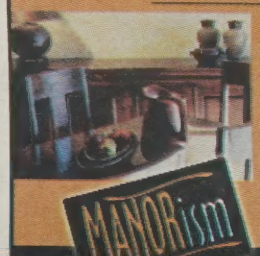

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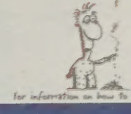




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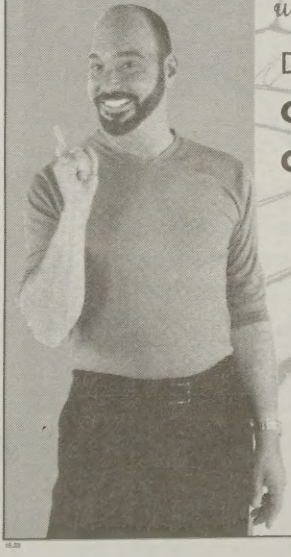

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Map courtesy of Atlanta Pride Committee, Inc

# Pride Tips

## DO:

**Check maps and calendars.** Several Pride events have new times or locations this year. On Friday night, the AIDS vigil is now in Piedmont Park , while the Commitment Ceremony has moved to the Sheraton Colony Square Hotel. The Pride Parade steps off at 1 p.m. like last year, but will now enter Piedmont Park through the Charles Allen gate.

**Drink lots of water.** Atlanta has enjoyed a cooler-than-usual summer so far, but don't underestimate the dehydrating effects of a full weekend of partying in the sun. Whether you carry your own, or buy bottles from vendors, lots of water is the number one recommendation for Pridesters. Free water will also be available at Pride's medical area, where you can also get help for heat-related and other injuries.

**Pace yourself.** In addition to the vendor booths, Pride offers a Beer Garden for the first time this year. But unless upchucking in front of thousands of your closest friends is your idea of a good time, don't overdo the libations. You'll be able to come back the next day rather than spending it between the bed and the bathroom.

## DON'T:

**Plan to grill.** Pride offers a variety of food vendors, but if you want to bring your own food, don't plan to fire up the barbecue. Discouraged in the past, barbecue grills are now legally forbidden by the city's new Festival Ordinance because of the severe damage they cause to the park grounds.

**Use stakes to secure your shade tent.** Just like with grills, the city's new Festival Ordinance forbids staking tents into the turf of Piedmont Park. Bring weights to secure your tent, or find a free-standing model.

**Forget to give back.** In the midst of partying and seeing old friends, take some time to visit the many non-profit groups in the vendor's market to learn about all of the people fighting for your rights every day. And when you see Pride volunteers canvassing the crowd, drop some money in their donation buckets. Pride may not require an entrance fee, but it costs $500,000 to put on — your donation helps.

Laura Douglas-Brown

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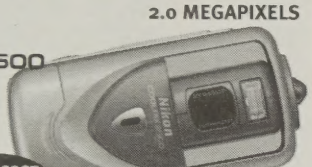

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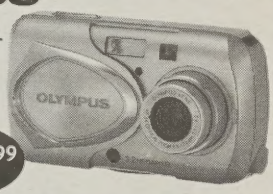

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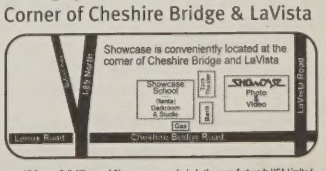
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PRIDE 2003

# 33 years of Atlanta Pride

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Thirty-four years ago, on June 28,1969, police who went to conduct a routine raid at a New York City gay bar called the Stonewall Inn got a major surprise: A ragtag bunch of drag queens, gay men and lesbians fought back against the police harassment in what became known as the Stonewall Riots.

The significance of the tumultuous three days that followed seemed immediately clear. By the next year, activists in several cities around the country, including Atlanta, held their own marches and rallies to observe the riot's anniversary. These marches became the first Gay Pride celebrations, and the riots that sparked them became known as the beginning of the modern gay rights movement.

During Pride in 1982, which had the theme 'Stonewall Then, Atlanta Now,' more than 4,000 people participated in a rally at the State Capitol.

## 1970

On the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, about 100 activists march down Peachtree Street. The march received no media coverage, and no known records remain.

## 1971

Democratic party activist Bill Smith legally incorporates the revolutionary Gay Liberation Front, following the trend of GLF groups springing up around the country. GLF sponsors Atlanta's first "Gay Liberation Day" ("lesbian" isn't specifically included yet) march down Peachtree Street to Piedmont Park. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution covers the march and estimates attendance at 50; GLF estimates 125.

## 1972

Over 300 march in the next Gay Pride, which is covered widely by local television. GLF again sponsors the event, but dissolves the next year. Charlie St. John is appointed by Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell to the city's Community Relations Commission. He is the city's first openly gay appointee. Pride is viewed by some gay businesses as too radical, and two large gay bars throw out activists distributing Pride fliers.

## 1973

Gay Pride continues to grow, although some marchers wear paper bags over their heads to demonstrate the dangers of coming out. Gays picket the Atlanta Journal-Constitution after Charlie St. John is fired from his job as a copy carrier for distributing Gay Pride fliers. The GBI searches St. John's apartment on drug charges many believe to be fabricated.

## 1974

The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, formed in 1972, fields the first openly lesbian softball team to play in the city league, and helps coordinate Lesbian & Gay Pride Day.

## 1975

Local gay media outlets founded in the year before now cover Pride, with attendance estimated at 600. The Barb bills itself as "the groovy newspaper covering Atlanta and the Southeast"; Cruise is a gay bar guide.

## 1976

Gay Pride celebrates the theme "Christopher St. South" with 1,000 marchers. Mayor Maynard Jackson issues a "Gay Pride Day" proclamation. Angry conservatives form "Citizens for a Decent Atlanta," call for Jackson's resignation, and take out large newspaper ads claiming the proclamation encourages "acts against the moral laws of Judeo-Christian tradition."

The Gay Pride Planning Committee renames itself the "Gay Rights Alliance," and although there was often tension between radical activists like GLF and more mainstream groups like gay churches around the first Pride marches, members of the new group include the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, Dykes for a Second American Revolution, the Metropolitan Community Church, Dignity (gay Catholics) and Integrity (gay Episcopalians).

## 1977

Stung by controversy from the year before, Mayor Jackson issues a "Human Rights Week" proclamation instead of "Gay Pride." About 1,500 attend Pride, in which the Gay Rights Alliance carries a banner calling for national gay rights legislation and an Atlanta gay rights ordinance (not passed until 1986). At Pride, Gil Robinson announces the formation of a gay political group, First Tuesday. Suggested chants distributed at the march include "Anita Bryant go away: Gay rights are here to stay"—a reference to the controversial orange juice queen turned anti-gay spokesperson.

## 1978

Anita Bryant doesn't go away, and in fact comes to Atlanta to give the keynote address at the Southern Baptist Convention at the World Congress Center. A protest at Bryant's June 11 visit takes the place of the usual gay Pride celebration, and police estimate 2,000 march on the World Congress Center. Activists place attendance as high as 4,000, and money collected at the rally is used to start the Atlanta Gay Center, now the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center.

## 1979

Pride is put together by those helping organize the First National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Ten years after the Stonewall Riots, Pride's theme is "Lavender Anniversary." Events include the first gay film festival at the Metropolitan Community Church and an open mike at the Pride rally. Estimated attendance ranges from 700 to 1,000.

## 1980

A new decade brings a new name for Gay Pride, now dubbed "Lesbian Gay Transperson" Pride day—the "LGT" is sometimes also interpreted as "Let's Get Together." Over 1,200 attend. The Gay Atlanta Minorities Association sponsors a rap session on "Black Lesbian/Gay/Transperson survival in the '80s." Pride's theme is "International Gay Solidarity Day."

## 1981

LGT Pride attempts to advertise on MARTA. The fund-raising and publicity committee reports that initial discussions are "positive," but MARTA officials later refuse to allow the words "lesbian, gay, transperson" and suggest "free-thinking, free-spirited persons" instead. LGT Pride events include a street festival on 7th Street and a march from Piedmont Park to City Hall; an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 attend. The Gay Atlanta Minorities Association boycotts Pride, citing racism. But survival soon takes on a whole new meaning: The Georgia Department of Human Resources begins tracking AIDS cases in the state, and three are reported.

## 1982

Pride's theme is "Stonewall Then, Atlanta Now," and 4,000 participate in a rally at the State Capitol; there is also a carnival on Peachtree Place. The Atlanta City Council issues a Lesbian Gay Transperson Pride proclamation without the signature of Mayor Andrew Young, who contends approval is not needed for "private sexual practices."

## 1983

Pride theme is "Out Front, Out Loud, Outstanding," and the first "Stop AIDS" banner appears in the march. Attendance appears to drop, estimated by police at 2,000. The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance hosts a candlelight Dyke March from Candler Park to Little Five Points; the event will be resurrected 10 years later. Headline in the June 26, 1983 issue of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "Gays becoming key factor in city politics."

## 1984

Lesbian/Gay Pride parade and rally takes place on July 3, with the theme "Once more, with feeling." This time, Mayor Andrew Young obliges with a "Gay and Les-bian Civil Rights Day" proclamation. Speakers include Sonia Johnson, an ex-Mormon feminist and third party presidential candidate. Attendance estimated at 1,500.

## 1985

Mayor Andrew Young proclaims first Gay Pride Week in Atlanta; the first community memorial for those who have died of AIDS is held. Attendance remains steady.

## 1986

Pride theme is "Forward Together" as

Please see TIMELINE on Page 50

PRIDE 2003

TIMELINE, continued from Page 49

speakers gather on the steps of the state capitol; most of the organizers are also working on the Second National March on Washington, which takes place the next year. Coke reportedly offers two trailers for the rally, until the company finds out the subject; then Coke offers to donate ice cream, safely without the corporate logo. (Ten years later, in 1996, Coke will become a major corporate sponsor of Pride). The week's events include a statewide gay rights conference, picnic in the park, women's softball, and gay church and atheist events, but only about 2,000 participate on the actual Pride day.

## 1987

Pride organizing is a last-minute effort, with only about 500 showing up for a rally on the steps of the state capitol. Speakers include Leigh VanderEls, a lesbian mother who lost custody of her son and, with her partner Chris Cash, founded Southern Voice.

## 1988

In the midst of the AIDS crisis, Pride theme is "A Celebration of Life." About 1,000 march from the Civic Center to Piedmont Park. The first Pride Prom, a gay dance, is held.

## 1989

On the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, Pride theme is "Stonewall: Reasons to Remember." Mayoral candidate Maynard Jackson campaigns for gay votes at Pride, although once elected, he doesn't appear the next year.

## 1990

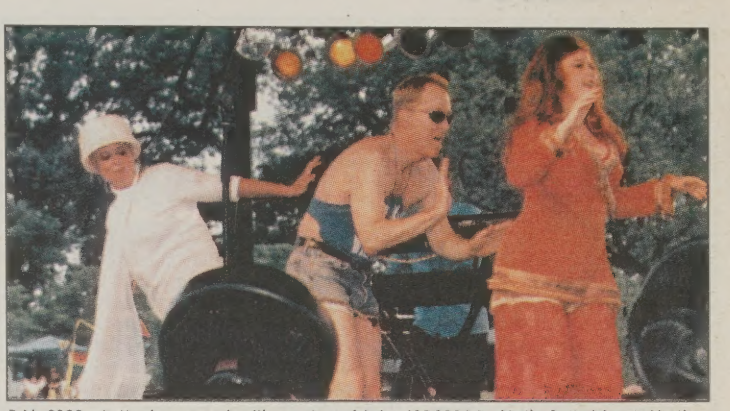
Pride draws 5,000 to Piedmont Park, as a billboard reading "Gay America Loves You" is erected over Interstate 75/85 during the summer. Of the 14 invited speakers, only four are gay or lesbian—most are politicians seeking votes. In a reaction to the problem, Pride later enacts a policy prohibiting candidates from speaking from the Pride stage, but the policy creates its own controversies in later years.

## 1991

Theme is "Be There, Be Aware, Be Counted," and Pride attendance makes its first giant leap, to an estimated 30,000. Grand marshals are Charlie St. John and Cheryl Summerville, who was fired from her job as a cook at Cracker Barrel for being gay. Fourth Tuesday hosts a lesbian and gay business weekend during the first weekend of Pride. Led by Dale Biggers, who helped organize Pride during the '80s, the Atlanta Pride Committee officially incorporates as a non-profit with 501(c)3 status. Front Runners hosts the first Pride 5K Run/Walk.

## 1992

Pride takes another huge leap: an estimated 60,000 attend in Piedmont Park. Theme is "Take Pride: Celebrate Your Individuality." Controversy abounds: AIDS activists protest a comment by a Pride co-chair that they interpreted as AIDS-phobic, while supporters of Samantha Claar, a lesbian running for state legislature, launch a "Let Samantha Speak" movement to protest Pride's policy against political speeches.



Pride 2000 set attendance records with organizers claiming 400,000 joined in the festival, boosted by the headlining band, the B-52s. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

## 1993

Pride is dedicated to the memory of Venus Landin, an African-American lesbian who dies as the victim of domestic violence. Theme of "It's Time to Tell America" builds on excitement of those who attended the 1993 March on Washington. Also building on a successful March on Washington event, Atlanta holds the "Dyke March" on Saturday night. Pride gains its first major, national corporate sponsor: Bud Light.

Overall Pride attendance grows to 100,000, but Pride organizers prove to have been too ambitious in purchasing t-shirts and other merchandise to sell to the crowds. Perhaps due in part to excessive rain over the weekend, Pride is left with thousands in unsold merchandise, a huge debt, and eventually a lawsuit from an unpaid t-shirt manufacturer. A settlement is eventually reached, with the Pride Committee getting a year to pay back the tab.

## 1994

Pride's theme is "From Stonewall to

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# PRIDE 2003

Atlanta," with events scheduled two weekends early so that Atlantans can attend the Stonewall 25 and Gay Games in New York City. Attendance estimated at 150,000. Pride Committee brings in enough revenue to pay off 1993 debt and 1994 expenses. Pride schedule expands to include Friday night, for a total of three days of events in Piedmont Park.

## 1995

Atlanta Pride celebrates its 25th anniversary with the theme "From Silence to Celebration." Attendance estimated at 120,000. For this festival, the Atlanta Pride Committee hires its first paid employee, part-time executive administrator Hubert Alexander. AIDS Survival Project takes over responsibility for organizing the Pride AIDS Candlelight Vigil.

## 1996

Atlanta's own Indigo Girls headline the Pride stage in Piedmont Park, setting a new attendance record of 300,000 for the festival. In keeping with the 1996 Olympics, beginning later in the summer, Pride theme is "People of the World: Listen, Think, Act." For this festival, Pride hires its first full-time executive director, Donna Narducci.

## 1997

Pride celebrates theme of "Generations of Pride," but a more apt theme might be "Triumph Over Fear"—the unsolved bombing of the Otherside Lounge, a popular lesbian and gay bar, in February has security tight and many participants on edge. Stage speakers repeatedly warn those attending to keep coolers, backpacks and other personal items with them and report any suspicious activity, but no incidents are reported. As people turn out perhaps to send a message to the bomber, organizers say attendance again hits 300,000.

## 1998

With the theme "Unity Through Diversity", Pride draws an estimated 220,000 to the park. But extreme heat throughout the weekend prompts some participants, and later organizers, to seriously consider moving the festival to the fall or changing the Sunday afternoon parade to a night parade. But organizers later decide to keep the festival where it is, on the anniversary of Stonewall; for the time being, the parade remains at noon.

## 1999

Theme is "Prideful Past, Powerful Future." The last Pride of the century—and the 30th anniversary of Stonewall—brings rain, with attendance estimated by organizers at an ambitious (and disputed) 200,000. Pride includes a greatly heightened focus on families and children, with a "Children's Kamp" and a series of workshops and child-related activities scheduled throughout the weekend. For this festival, Pride hires two part-time employees, a festival director and a finance director.

Recent Atlanta Pride festivals have been known more for their lively festivities than fierce political stance. Still, organizers of the event say the sheer numbers attending Pride make a political statement. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

## 2000

With the B-52s as Sunday afternoon's headline band, the 30th annual Pride festival sets a new attendance record, with organizers claiming 400,000 attended the weekend events. A mixture of sweltering sun and cooling drizzle greeted revelers at Pride's new location in Piedmont Park's meadow, and a dazzling rainbow arced over the park Sunday night to send the event out in memorable gay style.

## 2001

The Pride parade is the largest in the event's history, with over 150 entries. Although the weekend's theme is "Educate, Celebrate, Participate," it could have been "Gay Political Power," as the weekend drew more candidates campaigning for gay votes than ever before. All three major contenders for Atlanta mayor — including Shirley Franklin, who won in November with strong gay support — stumped during the festival, along with at least a dozen City Council candidates.

## 2002

Pride celebrates the theme "The Power of Pride" and draws counter-protesters for the first time in recent memory. About a dozen members of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan. — led by Rev. Fred Phelps, famous for his "God Hates Fags" Web site and picketing Matthew Shepard's funeral — turn out Sunday morning to jeer at the beginning of the Pride parade. In response, members of local MCC churches pray and take communion on the opposite street corner from the Phelps clan.

## 2003

This year's theme is "Freedom to Be." The 33nd annual celebration is history in the making — what will your legacy be?

—Sources: Southern Voice archives and staff reports; Dave Hayward; Maria Helena Dolan; Atlanta Pride Committee.

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PRIDE 2003

# Pride Weekend calendar of events

CALENDAR, continued from on Page 14

## SUNDAY JUNE 29

**Alanta Pride Festival***
11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Piedmont Park
404-929-0071
www.atlantapride.org

**Pride Parade DJs**
11 a.m.
Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse patio
911 Piedmont Ave. NE
404-607-0082
www.outwritebooks.com

**HRC Pride Brunch & Block Party**
11 a.m. – 1 p.m, brunch
11 a.m. – 4 p.m., block party
Nickiemoto's
990 Piedmont Ave.
$35
www.hrc.org/alanta/

**Pride Parade***
1 p.m.
From MARTA Civic Center Station, along Peachtree Street & 10th Street to Piedmont Park
www.atlantapride.org

**Coca-Cola Main Stage***
1:30 p.m. – Delancey Street Band
2 p.m. – Speakers: Mayor Shirley Franklin, City Council President Cathy Woolard, City Council member Anne Fauver
2:15 p.m. – The Accusations
2:55 p.m. – Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus
3:30 p.m. – Fat Chance
3:30 p.m. – Esera Tuaolo, former NFL player
4:30 p.m. – Three5Human
5:30 p.m. – Halcyon
6:15 p.m. – Speaker: Monica Helms, Trans=Action
6:25 p.m. – Speaker: Tyler McClelland, student activist
6:30 p.m. – Liz Melendez
7:30 p.m. – Michel Jons
8:30 p.m. – Starlight Cabaret

**Verizon Wireless Acoustic Stage***
2:45 p.m. – Brenda Coleman
3:30 p.m. – Diane Ward
4:15 p.m. – Sara O'Brien
5 p.m. – Angie Nelson
5:45 p.m. – Emerald Rose
6:30 p.m. – Amber Taylor

**'Free to Be ... Gay and Saved'**
Community-wide Gospel Sing
6 p.m.
New Covenant Church of Atlanta
743 Virginia Ave.
www.NewCovenantAtlanta.com

**Concert with Melodivas**
& Amy Carol Webb
7:30 p.m.
First Existentialist Congregation
470 Candler Park Dr.
$10 tickets, dessert provided
404-299-0387

**Blake's Big Time Drag Review**
"Hooray for Hollywood"
9:30 p.m.
Blake's on the Park
227 10th St. NE
404-892-5786

**R&B Soul Back in Time Party**
9 p.m.
Rico's View on Ponce
736 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-873-3220

**Jubilee Gospel Show**
8 p.m.
Burkhart's
1492-F Piedmont Road
404-872-4403

Hosted by **Raven**, the Starlight Cabaret closes the Pride festival main stage on Sunday night with performances from some of the city's finest female impersonators. (Photo by Sher Pruitt)

Most nightclub events are subject to cover charges.
* Denotes events sponsored or co-sponsored by the Atlanta Pride Committee.


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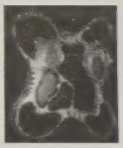

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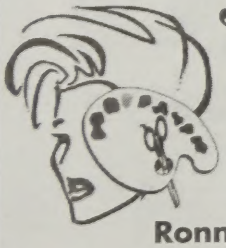

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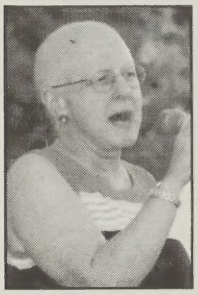
PRIDE 2003

# Memories

*Atlanta City Council member* ***Anne Fauver***



During Pride 2002, I was in the middle of the toughest part of my chemotherapy for breast cancer. I knew I couldn't walk the route, and I am not "the sit on the back of a convertible" type girl! A good friend, Bob Glascock, said, "Anne, don't worry. I'll decorate my truck and drive you."

He made a festive float of plants, paper flowers, streamers and all the extras a designer would think of. I wasn't supposed to be in the sun. He had a canopy and rigged fans to blow across coolers of ice to keep me cool. I really felt loved.

Then the parade. Friends calling support and perfect strangers shouting encouragement. There are no words to express what it felt like to be lifted on the shoulders of our community and carried in the parade. I have a wonderful picture in my office that captures the spirit of that day.

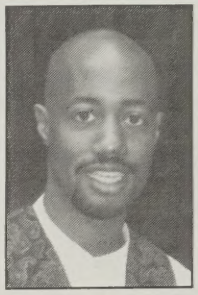
*East Point City Council member* ***Alex Prince****, who recently announced he will not seek re-election*

My first Pride in Atlanta was the year I was elected to office in East Point [2000]. I had been in office for six months by then and the stress had taken its toll on my weight, so I put on my tent shirt and sat on the back of my partner's Miata, the added 40 pounds and all. It was hard to know whether the car or I were the more stressed out over this very public display.

I jest about a lot of this now, because it is four years later and I have thrown out the tent shirts and the extra weight. My sense of humor has increased so I can laugh at it now, and the event is no longer about my vanity. I feel honored to take part in such an important event but I would be lying if I didn't say that I can't wait to be part of the crowd again.

***Craig Washington****, Positive Impact volunteer and training coordinator, former AID Atlanta African-American gay outreach coordinator*

The Pride of 1999 was significant for me because it was the culmination of my stint at AID Atlanta, so I was on the AID Atlanta float, and we were doing this '70s disco theme that was kind of funky and corny at the same time. ... There were a lot of things going on at the same time, but in terms of being in the parade, there was just excitement and just unfettered joy.



It was a really brilliant summer day and people were in a really celebratory mood that I still carry with me. It just showed some of the best of what gay Atlanta can be, in terms of the sheer volume of us. And coming down Peachtree Street to that last stretch, it wasn't just gay folks — I clocked folks who looked straight to me, and it was so many people of varying walks of life, all coming out and cheering us on. It made me feel welcome in Atlanta even though I had been here for years.

***Allen Thornell****, Georgia Equality executive director*

My first Atlanta Pride event was in 1995. Coming from Salt Lake City, the sheer size of the event was almost overwhelming. Up until that point in my life, there had only been a few times when I ever felt in the majority — I was just like everyone else.

That feeling gave me a great sense of security — both mentally and in terms of a real physical sense — that really cemented my commitment to being out all day, every day.

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